

THE
Provok'd Wife ;
A
COMEDY ;

As it is Acted at the
Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*.

Written by Sir *John Vanbrugh*.



L O N D O N :

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PROLOGUE

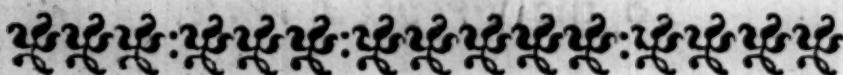
To the *Provok'd Wife*.

Spoken by Mrs. *Bracegirdle*.

SINCE 'tis the Intent and Business of the Stage,
 To copy out the Follies of the Age;
 To hold to every Man a faithful Glass,
 And shew him of what Species he's an Ass;
 I hope the next that teaches in the School,
 Will shew our Author he's a scribbling Fool.
 And that the Satire may be sure to bite,
 Kind Heaven! inspire some venom'd Priest to write,
 And grant some ugly Lady may indite.
 For I wou'd have him lash'd, by Heavens! I wou'd,
 Till his Presumption swam away in Blood.
 Three Plays at once proclaims a Face of Brass,
 No matter what they are; That's not the Case,
 To write three Plays, e'en that's to be an Ass.
 But what I least forgive, he knows it too,
 For to his Cost he lately has known you.
 Experience shews, to many a Writer's smart,
 You hold a Court where Mercy ne'er had part;
 So much of the old Serpent's Sting you have,
 You love to Damn, as Heaven delights to Save.
 In foreign Parts, let a bold Volunteer,
 For publick Good, upon the Stage appear,
 He meets ten thousand Smiles, to dissipate his Fear.

The P R O L O G U E.

*All tickle on the adventuring young Beginner,
And only scourge th' incorrigible Sinner;
They touch indeed his Faults, but with a Hand
So gentle, that his Merit still may stand:
Kindly they buoy the Follies of his Pen,
That he may shun 'em when he writes again.
But 'tis not so in this good-natur'd Town,
All's one, an Ox, a Poet, or a Crown;
Old England's Play was always knocking down.*



E P I L O G U E,

By another Hand.

Spoken by Lady Brute and Belinda.

Lady B. **N**O Epilogue!

Bel. I swear I know of none.

Lady. Lord! How shall we excuse it to the Town?

Bel. Why, we must e'en say something of our own.

Lady. Our own! Ay, that must needs be precious stuff.

Bel. I'll lay my Life, they'll like it well enough.

Come, Faith, begin——

Lady. Excuse me, after you.

Bel. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my Cue.

Lady. O for the World, I would not have Precedence.

Bel. O Lord!

Lady. I Swear——

Bel. O Fye!

Lady. I'm all Obedience.

First then, know all, before our Doom is fixt,
The Third Day is for us——

Bel. Nay and the Sixth.

Lady.



EPILOGUE.

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Lady. We speak not from the Poet now, nor is it
His Cause—— (I want a Rhyme)

Bel. That we sollicit.

Lady. Then sure you cannot have the Hearts to be severe,
And damn us——

Bel. Damn us ! Let 'em if they dare.

Lady. Why, if they should, what Punishment remains ?

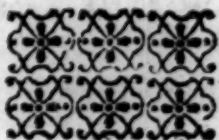
Bel. Eternal Exile from behind our Scenes.

Lady. But if they're kind, that Sentence we'll recall,
We can be grateful——

Bel. And have wherewithal :

Lady. But at Grand Treaties hope not to be trusted,
Before Preliminaries are adjusted.

Bel. You know the Time, and we appoint this Place ;
Where, if you please, we'll meet and sign the
(Peace.





Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Constant.</i>	<i>Mr. Verbruggen.</i>
<i>Heartfree.</i>	<i>Mr. Hudson.</i>
<i>Sir John Brute.</i>	<i>Mr. Betterton.</i>
<i>Treble, A Singing-Master.</i>	<i>Mr. Bowman.</i>
<i>Rasor, Valet de Chambre to Sir J. B.</i>	<i>Mr. Bowen.</i>
<i>Justice of the Peace.</i>	<i>Mr. Bright.</i>
<i>Lord Rake</i> }	
<i>Coll. Bully</i> }	<i>Companions to Sir J. B.</i>
<i>Constable and Watch.</i>	

W O M E N.

<i>Lady Brute.</i>	<i>Mrs. Barry.</i>
<i>Belinda, her Niece.</i>	<i>Mrs. Bracegirdle.</i>
<i>Lady Fancyfull.</i>	<i>Mrs. Bowman.</i>
<i>Mademoiselle.</i>	<i>Mrs. Willis.</i>
<i>Cornet and Pipe, Servants to Lady Fan.</i>	

T H E



THE PROVOK'D WIFE.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Sir John Brute's House.*

Enter Sir John, solus.



WHAT cloying Meat is Love——— when Matrimony's the Sauce to it? Two years Marriage has debauch'd my five Senses. Every thing I see, every thing I hear, every thing I feel, every thing I smell, and every thing I taste——— methinks has Wife in't.

No Boy was ever so weary of his Tutor, no Girl of her Bib, no Nun of doing Penance, or old Maid of being chaste, as I am of being married.

Sure there's a secret Curse entail'd upon the very Name of Wife. My Lady is a young Lady, a fine Lady, a witty Lady, a virtuous Lady——— and yet I hate her: There is but one thing on Earth I loath beyond her: That's Fighting. Would my Courage come up

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up but to a fourth part of my Ill-Nature, I'd stand buff to her Relations, and thrust her out of Doors.

But Marriage has sunk me down to such an Ebb of Resolution, I dare not draw my Sword, tho even to get rid of my Wife. But here she comes.

Enter Lady Brute.

L. B. Do you dine at home to-day, Sir John?

Sir J. Why, do you expect I should tell you, what I don't know my self?

L. B. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir J. If thinking wrong were an excuse for Impertinence, Women might be justify'd in most things they say or do.

L. B. I'm sorry I've said any thing to displease you.

Sir J. Sorrow for things past, is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

L. B. My Enquiry was only that I might have provided what you lik'd.

Sir J. Six to four you had been in the wrong there again; for what I lik'd yesterday I don't like to-day, and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I mayn't like to morrow.

L. B. But if I had askt you what you lik'd?

Sir J. Why then there would be more asking about it, than the thing is worth.

L. B. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir J. Ay, but that sort of Knowledge is not a Wife's Talent.

L. B. Whate'er my Talent is, I'm sure my Will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir J. If Women were to have their Wills, the World wou'd be finely govern'd.

L. B. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise: You married me for Love.

Sir J. And you me for Money: So you have your Reward, and I have mine.



L. B.

The Provok'd Wife.

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L. B. What is it that disturbs you?

Sir J. A Parson.

L. B. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir J. He has married me.

[Exit Sir John.]

Lady Brute, sola.

The Devil's in the Fellow, I think—— I was told before I married him, that thus 'twou'd be: But I thought I had Charms enough to govern him; and that where there was an Estate, a Woman must needs be happy: so my Vanity has deceiv'd me, and my Ambition has made me uneasy. But some Comfort still; if one would be reveng'd of him, these are good times; a Woman may have a Gallant, and a separate Maintenance too—— The surly Puppy—— yet he's a Fool for't; for hitherto he has been no Monster: But who knows how far he may provoke me? I never lov'd him, yet I have been ever true to him; and that, in spite of all the Attacks of Art and Nature upon a poor weak Woman's Heart, in favour of a tempting Lover.

Methinks so noble a Defence as I have made, shou'd be rewarded with a better Usage—— Or who can tell—— Perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my Husband, may be a Judgment upon me for my Cruelty to my Lover—— Lord, with what Pleasure cou'd I indulge that Thought, were there but a possibility of finding Arguments to make it good!—— And how do I know but there may—— Let me see—— What opposes?—— My Matrimonial Vow—— Why, what did I vow? I think I promis'd to be true to my Husband.

Well; and he promis'd to be kind to me.

But he han't kept his Word——

Why then I'm absolv'd from mine—— Ay, that seems clear to me. The Argument's good between the King and the People, why not between the Husband and the Wife? O, but that Condition was not express'd—— No matter, 'twas understood.

Well, by all I see, if I argue the matter a little longer with my self, I shan't find so many Bug-bears in the way,

The Provok'd Wife.

way, as I thought I shou'd. Lord, what fine Notions of Virtue do we Women take up upon the Credit of old foolish Philosophers! Virtue's its own Reward, Virtue's this, Virtue's that——Virtue's an Ass, and a Gallant's worth forty on't.

Enter Belinda.

L. B. Good-morrow, dear Cousin.

Bel. Good-morrow, Madam, you look pleas'd this Morning.

L. B. I am so.

Bel. With what, pray?

L. B. With my Husband.

Bel. Drown Husbands; for yours is a provoking Fellow: As he went out just now, I pray'd him to tell me what time of Day 'twas; and he ask'd me if I took him for the Church-Clock, that was oblig'd to tell all the Parish.

L. B. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, *Belinda*, he has us'd me so barbarously of late, that I cou'd almost resolve to play the downright Wife——and cuckold him.

Bel. That wou'd be downright indeed.

L. B. Why, after all, there's more to be said for't than you'd imagine, Child. I know, according to the strict Statute Law of Religion, I shou'd do wrong: But if there were a Court of Chancery in Heaven, I'm sure I shou'd cast him.

Bel. If there were a House of Lords, you might.

L. B. In either I should infallibly carry my Cause. Why, he is the first Aggressor, not I.

Bel. Ay, but you know, we must return Good for Evil.

L. B. That may be a mistake in the Translation——Prithee be of my opinion, *Belinda*; for I'm positive I'm in the right; and if you'll keep up the Prerogative of a Woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do any thing you have a mind to. But I shall play the Fool and jest on, till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

Bel.

The Provok'd Wife.

II

Bel. I shan't take the liberty, Madam, to think of any thing that you desire to keep a Secret from me.

L. B. Alas, my Dear, I have no Secrets. My Heart cou'd never yet confine my Tongue.

Bel. Your Eyes, you mean; for I'm sure I have seen them gadding, when your Tongue has been lockt up safe enough.

L. B. My Eyes gadding! Prithee after who, Child?

Bel. Why, after one that thinks you hate him, as much as I know you love him.

L. B. *Constant*, you mean.

Bel. I do so.

L. B. Lord, what shou'd put such a thing into your Head?

Bel. That which puts things into most Peoples Heads, Observation.

L. B. Why what have you observ'd, in the name of wonder?

Bel. I have observ'd you blush when you met him; force your self away from him; and then be out of humour with every thing about you: In a word, never was poor Creature so spurr'd on by Desire, and so rein'd in with Fear!

L. B. How strong is Fancy!

Bel. How weak is Woman!

L. B. Prithee Niece, have a better opinion of your Aunt's Inclination.

Bel. Dear Aunt, have a better Opinion of your Niece's Understanding.

L. B. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

L. B. Then you are resolv'd to persist?

Bel. Positively.

L. B. And all I can say ———

Bel. Will signify nothing.

L. B. Tho I should swear 'twere false ———

Bel. I shou'd think it true.

L. B. Then let us both forgive, [*kissing her*] for we have both offended: I in making a Secret, you in discovering it.

Bel. Good-Nature may do much: But you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon t'other.

L. B. 'Tis true, *Belinda*, you have given me so many Proofs of your Friendship, that my Reserve has been indeed a Crime: But that you may more easily forgive me, remember, Child, that when our Nature prompts us to a thing our Honour and Religion have forbid us; we wou'd (wer't possible) conceal even from the Soul it self, the knowledge of the Body's Weakness.

Bel. Well, I hope, to make your Friend amends, you'll hide nothing from her for the future, tho the Body shou'd still grow weaker and weaker.

L. B. No, from this moment I have no more Reserve; and for a proof of my Repentance, I own, *Belinda*, I'm in danger. Merit and Wit assault me from without; Nature and Love sollicit me within; my Husband's barbarous Usage piques me to Revenge; and *Satan* catching at the fair occasion, throws in my way that Vengeance, which of all Vengeance pleases Women best.

Bel. 'Tis well *Constant*, don't know the Weakness of the Fortifications; for o' my Conscience he'd soon come on to the Assault.

L. B. Ay, and I'm afraid carty the Town too. But whatever you may have observ'd, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no Coquet, *Belinda*: and if you follow my advice, you'll never be one neither. 'Tis true, Coquetry is one of the main Ingredients in the natural Composition of a Woman, and I, as well as others, cou'd be well enough pleas'd to see a Crowd of young Fellows, ogling, and glancing, and watching all Occasions to do forty foolish officious Things: Nay, shou'd some of 'em push on, even to hanging or drowning: Why——Faith——if I shou'd let pure Women alone, I shou'd e'en be but too well pleas'd with't.

Bel. I'll swear 'twou'd tickle me strangely.

L. B. But after all, 'tis a vitious Practice in us, to give the least encouragement, but where we design to come to a Conclusion. For 'tis an unreasonable thing to engage a Man in a Disease, which we before-hand resolve we never will apply a Cure to.

Bel. 'Tis true; but then a Woman must abandon one of the supreme Blessings of her Life. For I am fully convinc'd, no Man has half that Pleasure in possessing a Mistress, as a Woman has in jilting a Gallant.

L. B. The happiest Woman then on Earth must be our Neighbour.

Bel. O the impertinent Composition! She has Vanity and Affectation enough to make her a ridiculous Original, in spite of all that Art and Nature ever furnish'd to any of her Sex before her.

L. B. She concludes all Men her Captives; and whatever Course they take, it serves to confirm her in that Opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks 'tis Modesty, and takes it for a proof of their Passion.

L. B. And if they are rude to her, 'tis Conduct, and done to prevent Town-talk.

Bel. When her Folly makes 'em laugh, she thinks they are pleas'd with her Wit.

L. B. And when her Impertinence makes 'em dull, concludes they are jealous of her Favours.

Bel. All their Actions and their Words, she takes for granted, aim at her.

L. B. And pities all other Women, because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Pray, out of pity to our selves, let us find a better Subject; for I'm weary of this. Do you think your Husband inclin'd to Jealousy?

L. B. O, no; he does not love me well enough for that.

Lord, how wrong Mens Maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their Wives, unless they are very fond of 'em; whereas they ought to consider the Womens Inclinations, for there depends their Fate.

Well, Men may talk; but they are not so wise as we — that's certain.

B

Bel.

Bel. At least in our Affairs.

L. B. Nay, I believe we shou'd outdo 'em in the business of the State too : For, methinks, they do and undo, and make but bad Work on't.

Bel. Why then don't we get into the Intrigues of Government as well as they ?

L. B. Because we have Intrigues of our own, that make us more Sport, Child. And so let's in and consider of 'em.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, A Dressing-Room.

Enter Lady Fancyful, Mademoiselle, and Cornet.

L. F. How do I look this Morning ?

Cor. Your Ladyship looks very ill truly.

L. F. Lard, how ill-natur'd thou art, *Cornet*, to tell me so, tho the thing shou'd be true. Don't you know that I have Humility enough to be but too easily out of Conceit with my self ? Hold the Glass ; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have. *Mademoiselle*, let me have your Opinion too.

Madam. My Opinion pe, *Matam*, dat your Ladyship never look so well in your Life.

L. F. Well, the *French* are the prettiest obliging People, they say the most acceptable, well-manner'd things——and never flatter.

Madam. Your Ladyship say great Justice inteed.

L. F. Nay, every-thing's just in my House but *Cornet*. The very Looking-glass gives her the *Dementi*. But I'm almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging.

[*Looking affectedly in the Glass.*]

Madam. Inteed, *Matam*, your Face pe handsomer den all de Looking-glass in tee World, croyiez moy.

L. F. But is it possible my Eyes can be so languishing——and so very full of Fire ?

Madam. *Matam*, if de Glass was Burning-glass, I believe your Eyes set de Fire in de House.

L. F. You may take that Night-gown, *Mademoiselle* ; get out of the Room, *Cornet* ; I can't endure you.
This

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This Wench methinks does look so unsufferable ugly.

Madam. Every ting look ugly, Matam, dat stand by your Latiship.

L. F. No really, *Madamoiselle*, methinks you look mighty pretty.

Madam. Ah Matam; de Moon have no Eclar, ven de Sun appear.

L. F. O pretty Expression! Have you ever been in Love, *Madamoiselle*?

Madam. Ouy, Matam.

[*sighing.*

L. F. And were you belov'd again?

Madam. No, Matam.

[*sighing.*

L. F. O ye Gods! What an unfortunate Creature shou'd I be in such a Case! But Nature has made me nice for my own Defence: I'm nice, strangely nice, *Madamoiselle*; I believe were the Merit of whole Mankind bestow'd upon one single Person, I shou'd still think the Fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him: and yet I cou'd love; nay fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: For I'm not cruel, *Madamoiselle*; I'm only nice.

Madam. Ah Matam, I wish I was fine Gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in the World to get leetel way into your Heart. I make Song, I make Verse, I give you de Serenade, I give great many Present to *Madamoiselle*; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang my self, I drown my self. Ah ma chere Dame, que je vous aimerois.

[*Embracing her.*

L. F. Well, the *French* have strange obliging ways with 'em; you may take those two pair of Gloves, *Madamoiselle*.

Madam. Me humbly tanke my sweet Lady.

Enter Cornet.

Cor. *Madam*, here's a Letter for your Ladyship by the Penny-post.

L. F. Some new Conquest, I'll warrant you. For without Vanity, I look'd extremely clear last Night, when I went to the Park.

O agreeable! Here's a new Song made of me: And ready set too. O thou welcome thing! [*kissing it.*] Call Pipe hither, she shall sing it instantly.

Enter Pipe.

Here, sing me this new Song, Pipe.

S O N G.

I.

FL Y, fly, you Happy Shepherds, fly;
 Avoid Philira's Charms;
 The Rigour of her Heart denies
 The Heaven that's in her Arms.
 Ne'er hope to gaze, and then retire,
 Nor yielding, to be blest:
 Nature, who form'd her Eyes of Fire,
 Of Ice compos'd her Breast.

II.

Yet, lovely Maid, this once believe,
 A Slave whose Zeal you move;
 The Gods, alas, your Youth deceive,
 Their Heav'n consists in Love.
 In spite of all the Thanks you owe,
 You may reproach 'em this,
 That where they did their Form bestow,
 They have deny'd their Blifs.

L. F. Well there may be Faults, *Mademoiselle*, but the Design is so very obliging, 'twou'd be a matchless Ingratitude in me to discover 'em.

Madam. May foy, Matam, I tink de Gentleman's Song tell you de trute. If you never love, you never be happy—— Ah—— que l'aime l'amour moy.

Enter Servant with another Letter.

Serv. Madam, here's another Letter for your Ladyship.

L. F. 'Tis thus I am importun'd every Morning, *Mademoiselle*. Pray how do the French Ladies when they are thus Accablees?

Madam.

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Madam. Matam, dey never complain. Au contraire, when one *Frense* Laty have got hundred Lover——den she do all she can——to get a hundred more.

L. F. Well, strike me dead, I think they have le Gout bon. For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be ador'd by all the Men, and envy'd by all the Women——Yet I'll swear I'm concern'd at the Torture I give 'em. Lard, why was I form'd to make the whole Creation uneasy? But let me read my Letter. [Reads.]

“ If you have a mind to hear of your Faults, instead
“ of being prais'd for your Virtues, take the pains to
“ walk in the Green-walk in *St. James's* with your
“ Women an hour hence. You'll there meet one, who
“ hates you for some things, as he cou'd love you for
“ others, and therefore is willing to endeavour your Re-
“ formation—— If you come to the Place I mention,
“ you'll know who I am; if you don't, you never shall:
“ so take your Choice.

This is strangely familiar, *Mademoiselle*; now have I a provoking Fancy to know who this impudent Fellow is.

Madam. Den take your Scarf and your Mask, and go to de Rendezvous. De *Frense* Laty do justement comme ça.

L. F. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a Man, *Mademoiselle*?

Madam. Eh, pourquoi non?

L. F. What, and a Man perhaps I never saw in my Life?

Madam. Tant mieux: c'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.

L. F. Why, how do I know what Designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me, for ought I know.

Madam. Ravish?—— Bagatelle, I would fain see one impudent Rogue ravish *Mademoiselle*; Ouy, je le voudrois.

L. F. O but my Reputation, *Mademoiselle*, my Reputation; ah ma chere Reputation.

Madam. Matam—— Quand on l' a une fois perdue—— On n'en est plus embarassée.

L. F. Fe *Mademoiselle*, Fe: Reputation is a Jewel.

Madam. Qui coute bien chere, Matam.

L. F. Why sure you would not sacrifice your Honour to your Pleasure?

Madam. Je suis Philosophe.

L. F. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if Honour be a Burden, *Mademoiselle*, must it not be borne?

Madam. Chaqu'un a sa façon—— Quand quelque chose m' incommode moy—— je m'en defais, Vite.

L. F. Get you gone, you little naughty *Frenchwoman* you, I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Madam. Turn me out of Doors!—— turn your self out of doors, and go see what de Gentleman have to say to you—— Tenez. Voila [*giving her her things hastily*] vostre Escharpe, voila vostre Quoife, voila vostre Masque, voila tout.

Hey, Mercure, Coquin; call one Chiar for Matam, and one oder [*calling within*] for me: Va t'en vite.

[*Turning to her Lady, and helping her on hastily with her Things.*]

Alons, Matam; depechez vous donc. Mon Dieu, quelles Scrupules.

L. F. Well for once, *Mademoiselle*, I'll follow your Advice, out of the intemperate Desire I have to know who this ill-bred Fellow is. But I have too much Delicatsse, to make a Practice on't.

Madam. Belle chose vraiment que la Delicatsse, lors qu'il s'agit de se divertir——a ça—— Vous voila equipee partons.

—— He bien? —— qu' avez vous donc?

L. F. J'ay peur.

Madam. Je n'en ay point moy.

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L. F. I dare not go.

Madam. Demeurez donc.

L. F. Je suis poltrone.

Madam. Tant pis pour vous.

L. F. Curiosity's a wicked Devil,

Madam. Ce'st une charmante Sainte.

L. F. It ruin'd our first Parents.

Madam. Elle a bien diverti leurs Enfants.

L. F. L'Honneur est contre.

Madam. Le Plaisir est pour.

L. F. Must I then go ?

Madam. Must you go ? ——— must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live ? De Nature bid you do one, de Nature bid you do toder. Vous me ferez enrager.

L. F. But when Reason corrects Nature, *Mademoiselle* —

Madam. Elle est donc bien insolente, c'est sa Sœur aînée.

L. F. Do you then prefer your Nature to your Reason, *Mademoiselle* ?

Madam. Ouy da.

L. F. Pourquoi ?

Madam. Because my Nature make me merry, my Reason make me mad.

L. F. Ah la mechante Francoise.

Madam. Ah la belle Angloise.

[Forcing her Lady off.]

The End of the First Act.

ACT

A C T II.

S C E N E, St. James's Park

Enter Lady Fancyful and Madamoiselle.

Lady Fan. **W**ELL, I vow, Madamoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident Fellow is.

Enter Heartfree.

Look, there's *Heartfree*. But sure it can't be him; he's a profess'd Woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked Eyes may have done?

Madam. Il nous approche, Madam.

Lady Fan. Yes, 'tis he: now will he be most intolerably Cavalier, tho he should be in love with me.

Heartf. Madam, I'm your humble Servant; I perceive you have more Humility and Good-Nature than I thought you had.

Lady Fan. What you attribute to Humility and Good-Nature, Sir, may perhaps be only due to Curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas had ill Manners enough to write that Letter.

[Throwing him his Letter.]

Heartf. Well, and now I hope you are satisfy'd.

Lady Fan. I am so, Sir; Good-b'w'y t'ye.

Heartf. Nay, hold there; tho you have done your Business, I han't done mine: By your Ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's Prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest Woman about Town, or not? How she stares upon me! What! this passes for an impertinent Question with you now, because you think you are so already.

Lady Fan. Pray, Sir, let me ask you a Question in my Turn: By what Right do you pretend to examine me?

Heartf.

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Heartf. By the same Right that the Strong govern the Weak, because I have you in my power; for you cannot get so quickly to your Coach, but I shall have time enough to make you hear every thing I have to say to you.

Lady Fan. These are strange Liberties you take, Mr. *Heartfree*.

Heartf. They are so, Madam, but there's no help for it; for know that I have a Design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, Sir!

Heart. Yes; and one that will turn to your Glory, and my Comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well Sir.

Heartf. Let me see—— Your Vanity, Madam, I take to be about some eight Degrees higher than any Woman's in the Town, let t'other be who she will; and my Indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now could you find the Way to turn this Indifference into Fire and Flames, methinks your Vanity ought to be satisfy'd; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable Terms.

L. Fancy. And pray at what rate would this Indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an Appetite to desire it?

Heartf. Why, Madam, to drive a Quaker's Bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it——you must lay me down——your Affectation.

L. Fan. My Affectation, Sir.

Heartf. Why, I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

L. Fan. You grow rude, Sir. Come, Mademoiselle, it's high time to be gone.

Madam. Alons, alons, alons.

Heartf. [*stopping them.*] Nay, you may as well stand still; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

L. Fan. What mean you, Sir?

Heartf. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful Woman upon Earth.

L. Fan. Ungrateful! To who?

Heartf.

Heartf. To Nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has Nature done for me?

Heartf. What you have undone by Art: It made you handsome; it gave you Beauty to a miracle, a Shape without a Fault, Wit enough to make them relish, and so turn'd you loose to your own Discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the Pity of our Sex, and the Jest of your own. There is not a Feature in your Face, but you have found the way to teach it some affected Convulsion; your Feet, your Hands, your very Fingers Ends are directed never to move without some ridiculous Air or other; and your Language is a sutable Trumpet, to draw Peoples Eyes upon the Raree-show.

Madam. [*aside.*] Est ce qu'on fais l'amour en Angleterre comme ca.

Lady Fan. [*aside.*] Now cou'd I cry for Madnefs, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it.

Heartf. Now do you hate me for telling you the Truth, but that's because you don't believe it is so; for were you once convinc'd of that, you'd reform for your own sake. But 'tis as hard to persuade a Woman to quit any thing that makes her ridiculous, as 'tis to prevail with a Poet to see a Fault in his own Play.

Lady Fan. Every Circumstance of nice Breeding must needs appear ridiculous to one who has so natural an Antipathy to Good-Manners.

Heartf. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole World is of my Opinion, and that those who flatter and commend you, do it to no other intent, but to make you persevere in your Folly; that they may continue in their Mirth.

Lady Fan. Sir, tho you and all that World you talk of, shou'd be so impertinently officious as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave my self; I shou'd still have Charity enough for my own Understanding, to believe my self in the right, and all you in the wrong.

Madam. Le voila mort.

[*Exeunt Lady Fanciful
and Mademoiselle.*]

Heartf.

Heartf. gazing after her.] There her single Clapper has publish'd the Sense of the whole Sex.

Well, this once I have endeavour'd to wash the Black-amoor white; but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach Sincerity to a Courtier, Generosity to an Usurer, Honesty to a Lawyer, nay, Humility to a Divine, than Discretion to a Woman I see has once set her Heart upon playing the Fool.

Enter Constant.

Morrow, *Constant.*

Const. Good-morrow, *Jack* : what are you doing here this Morning ?

Heartf. Doing ! guess if thou canst.

Why I have been endeavouring to persuade my Lady *Fancyful*, that she's the foolishhest Woman about Town.

Const. A pretty Endeavour truly.

Heartf. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the Town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have us'd her as an absolute King would do *Magna Charta*.

Const. And how does she take it ?

Heartf. As Children do Pills; bite them, but can't swallow them.

Const. But, prithee what has put it into your Head, of all Mankind, to turn Reformer ?

Heartf. Why, one thing was, the Morning hung upon my Hands, I did not know what to do with my self; and another was, that as little as I care for Women, I cou'd not see with patience one that Heaven had taken such wondrous pains about, be so very industrious to make her self the Jack-Pudding of the Creation.

Const. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel Mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cur'd of a Disease that makes me so very uneasy; for Love, Love is the Devil, *Heartfree*.

Heartf. And why do you let the Devil govern you ?

Const. Because I have more Flesh and Blood than Grace and Self-denial. My dear, dear Mistress, 'dsdeath ! that so genteel a Woman should be a Saint, when Religion's out of fashion !

Heartf. Nay, she's much in the wrong truly; but who knows how far Time and good Example may prevail?

Const. O! they have plaid their Parts in vain already: 'Tis now two Years since that damned Fellow her Husband invited me to his Wedding: and there was the first time I saw that charming Woman, whom I have lov'd ever since, more than e'er a Martyr did his Soul; but she is cold, my Friend, still cold as the Northern Star.

Heartf. So are all Women by Nature, which makes them so willing to be warm'd.

Const. O don't profane the Sex, prithee think them all Angels for her sake, for she's virtuous even to a Fault.

Heartf. A Lover's Head is a good accountable thing truly; he adores his Mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her because she won't be leud.

Const. Well, the only Relief I expect in my Misery, is to see thee some day or other as deeply engag'd as my Yelf, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my Misfortunes.

Heartf. That Day will never come, be assur'd, *Ned*: Not but that I can pass a night with a Woman, and for the time, perhaps, make my self as good Sport as you can do. Nay, I can court a Woman too, call her Nymph, Angel, Goddess, what you please: but here's the Difference 'twixt you and I; I persuade a Woman she's an Angel, and she persuades you she's one.

Prithee let me tell you how I avoid falling in love: that which serves me for Prevention, may chance to serve you for a Cure.

Const. Well, use the Ladies moderately then, and I'll hear you.

Heartf. That using them moderately undoes us all; but I'll use them justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with.

I always consider a Woman, not as the Taylor, the Shoemaker, the Tire-woman, the Sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the Poet makes her; but I consider her as pure Nature has contriv'd her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old Grandmother *Eve*,
had

had I seen her naked in the Garden; for I consider her turn'd inside out. Her Heart well examin'd, I find there Pride, Vanity, Covetousness, Indiscretion, but above all things Malice; Plots eternally a forging, to destroy one another's Reputations, and as honestly to charge the Levity of Mens Tongues with the Scandal; hourly Debates how to make poor Gentlemen in love with them, with no other intent but to use them like Dogs when they have done; a constant Desire of doing more Mischief, and an everlasting War wag'd against Truth and Good-Nature.

Const. Very well, Sir; an admirable Composition truly!

Heartf. Then for her Outside, I consider it merely as an Outside; she has a thin Tiffany Covering, over just such stuff as you and I are made on.

As for her Motion, her Mien, her Airs, and all those Tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your Mistress at a Coronation dragging her Peacock's Train, with all her State and Insolence about her, twou'd strike you with all the awful Thoughts that Heaven it self could pretend to from you; whereas I turn the whole matter into a Jest, and suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on her but her Stays, and her under scanty quilted Petticoat.

Const. Hold thy profane Tongue, for I'll hear no more.

Heartf. What, you'll love on then?

Const. Yes, to Eternity.

Heartf. Yet you have no hopes at all.

Const. None.

Heartf. Nay, the Resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new Philosophy, That Love's like Virtue, its own Reward: So you and your Mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less Learning are in coming together.

Const. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear *Heartfree*.

[Embracing her.]

Heartf. Nay, prithee don't take me for your Mistress, for Lovers are very troublesome.

Const. Well, who knows what Time may do?

Heartf. And just now, he was sure Time could do nothing.

Const. Yet not one kind Glance in two Years, is somewhat strange.

Heartf. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the Business.

Const. Prithce, don't distract me.

Heartf. Nay, you are a good handsome young Fellow, she might use you better: Come, will you go see her? Perhaps she may have chang'd her Mind; there's some Hopes as long as she's a Woman.

Const. O, 'tis in vain to visit her: Sometimes to get a sight of her, I visit that Beast her Husband, but she certainly finds some Pretence to quit the Room as soon as I enter.

Heartf. It's much she don't tell him you have made Love to her too, for that's another good-natur'd thing usual amongst Women, in which they have several Ends.

Sometimes 'tis to recommend their Virtue, that they may be leud with the greater Security.

Sometimes 'tis to make their Husbands fight, in hopes they may be kill'd when their Affairs require it should be so: but most commonly 'tis to engage two Men in a Quarrel, that they may have the Credit of being fought for; and if the Lover's kill'd in the Business, they cry, *Poor Fellow, he had ill Luck*—— and so they go to Cards.

Const. Thy Injuries to Women are not to be forgiven. Look to't, if ever thou dost fall into their hands.

Heartf. They can't use me worse than they do you, that speak well of 'em.

O ho! here comes the Knight.

Enter Sir John Brute.

Heartf. Your Humble Servant, Sir *John*.

Sir John. Servant, Sir.

Heartf. How does all your Family?

Sir John. Pox o' my Family!

Const. How does your Lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir

The Provok'd Wife.

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Sir John. Do! I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday: I han't been at home to-night.

Const. What, were you out of Town?

Sir John. Out of Town! no, I was drinking.

Const. You are a true *Englishman*; don't know your own Happiness. If I were married to such a Woman, I would not be from her a Night for all the Wine in *France*.

Sir John. Not from her!—— Oons—— what a time should a Man have of that!

Heartfree. Why, there's no Division, I hope.

Sir John. No; but there's a Conjunction, and that's worse; a Pox of the Parson——Why the Plague don't you too marry? I fancy I look like the Devil to you.

Heartf. Why, you don't think you have Horns, do you?

Sir John. No, I believe my Wife's Religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her Religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heartf. Have a care, Knight, Women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their Hearts.

Const. Fy, fy; you have one of the best Wives in the World, and yet you seem the most uneasy Husband.

Sir John. Best Wives!—— the Woman's well enough, she has no Vice that I know of; but she's a Wife, and——damn a Wife: if I were married to a Hoghead of Claret, Matrimony would make me hate it.

Heartf. Why did you marry then? you were old enough to know your own Mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry? I married because I had a mind to lie with her, and she would not let me.

Heartf. Why did you not ravish her?

Sir John. Yes, and so have hedg'd my self into forty Quarrels with her Relations, besides buying my Pardon: But more than all that, you must know, I was afraid of being damn'd in those days; for I kept sneaking cowardly

ardly Company, Fellows that went to Church, said Grace to their Meat, and had not the least Tincture of Quality about them.

Heartf. But I think you have got into a better Gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, Sir, my Lord Rake and I are Hand and Glove, I believe we may get our Bones broke together to-night; have you a mind to share a Frolick?

Const. Not I, truly; my Talent lies to softer Exercises.

Sir John. What, a Down-Bed and a Strumpet? A pox of Venery, I say.

Will you come and drink with me this Afternoon?

Const. I can't drink to-day, but we'll come and sit an hour with you if you will.

Sir John. Phugh, Pox, sit an hour!

Why can't you drink?

Const. Because I'm to see my Mistress.

Sir John. Who's that?

Const. Why, do you use to tell?

Sir John. Yes.

Const. So won't I.

Sir John. Why?

Const. Because 'tis a Secret.

Sir John. Would my Wife knew it, 'twou'd be no Secret long.

Const. Why, do you think she can't keep a Secret?

Sir John. No more than she can keep Lent.

Heartf. Prithee tell it her to try, *Constant*.

Sir John. No, prithee, don't, that I mayn't be plagu'd with it.

Const. I'll hold you a Guinea you don't make her tell it you.

Sir John. I'll hold you a Guinea I do.

Const. Which way?

Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.

Heartf. Nay, if any thing does it, that will.

Const. But do you think, Sir—

Sir John. Oons, Sir, I think a Woman and a Secret are the two impertinentest Themes in the Universe: Therefore

Therefore pray let's hear no more of my Wife nor your Mistress. Damn 'em both with all my heart, and every thing else that daggles a Petticoat, except four generous Whores, with *Betty Sands* at the head of 'em, who are drunk with my Lord *Rake* and I ten times in a Fortnight.

[*Exit Sir John.*]

Const. Here's a dainty Fellow for you! And the veriest Coward too. But his Usage of his Wife makes me ready to stab the Villain.

Heartf. Lovers are short-sighted: All their Senses run into that of Feeling. This Proceeding of his is the only thing on Earth can make your Fortune. If any thing can prevail with her to accept of a Gallant, 'tis his ill Usage of her; for Women will do more for Revenge than they'll do for the Gospel.

Pruthee take heart, I have great hopes for you; and since I can't bring you quite off of her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on: for a whining Lover is the damnd'st Companion upon Earth.

Const. My dear Friend, flatter me a little more with these Hopes; for whilst they prevail, I have Heaven within me, and could melt with Joy.

Heartf. Pray no melting yet: let things go farther first. This Afternoon perhaps we shall make some advance. In the mean while, let's go dine at *Locket's*, and let Hope get you a Stomach.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful, and Madamoiselle.

L. F. Did you ever see any thing so importune, *Madamoiselle*?

Madam. Inteed, Matam, to say de trute, he wanted leetel Good-breeding.

L. F. Good-breeding! He wants to be caned, *Madamoiselle*: an insolent Fellow!

And yet let me expose my Weakness, 'tis the only Man on Earth I cou'd resolve to dispense my Favours on, were he but a fine Gentleman. Well; did Men but

know how deep an Impression a fine Gentleman makes in a Lady's Heart, they wou'd reduce all their Studies to that of Good-breeding alone.

Enter Cornet.

Cor. Madam, here's Mr. *Treble*. He has brought home the Verses your Ladyship made, and gave him to set.

L. F. O let him come in by all means.

Now, *Madamoiselle*, am I going to be unspeakably happy.

Enter Treble.

So, Mr. *Treble*, you have set my little Dialogue?

Treb. Yes, Madam, and I hope your Ladyship will be pleased with it.

L. F. O, no doubt on't; for really Mr. *Treble*, you set all things to a wonder: But your Musick is in particular heavenly, when you have my Words to clothe in't.

Treb. Your Words themselves, Madam, have so much Musick in 'em, they inspire me.

L. F. Nay, now you make me blush, Mr. *Treble*; but pray let's hear what you have done.

Treb. You shall, Madam.

A S O N G, to be sung between a Man and a Woman.

M. **A** H Lovely Nymph, the World's on fire;
Veil, veil those cruel Eyes:

W. The World may then in Flames expire,
And boast that so it dies.

M. But when all Mortals are destroy'd,
Who then shall sing your Praise?

W. Those who are fit to be employ'd:
The Gods shall Altars raise.

Treb. How does your Ladyship like it, Madam?

L. F. Rapture, Rapture, Mr. *Treble*, I'm all Rapture.
O Wit and Art, what Power have you, when join'd! I must needs tell you the Birth of this little Dialogue, Mr. *Treble*. Its Father was a Dream, and its Mother was the

the Moon. I dreamt by that unanimous Vote, I was chose Queen of that pale World: And that the first time I appear'd upon my Throne——all my Subjects fell in love with me. Just then I wak'd, and seeing Pen, Ink, and Paper lie idle upon the Table, I slid into my Morning-Gown, and writ this *in promptu*.

Treb. So I guess the Dialogue, Madam, is suppos'd to be between your Majesty, and your first Minister of State.

L. F. Just: He as Minister advises me to trouble my head about the Welfare of my Subjects; which I as Sovereign find a very impertinent Proposal. But is the Town so dull, Mr. *Treble*, it affords us never another new Song?

Treb. Madam, I have one in my Pocket, came out but yesterday, if your Ladyship pleases to let Mr. *Pipe* sing it.

L. F. By all means. Here, *Pipe*, make what Musick you can of this Song here.

S O N G.

I.

NOT an Angel dwells above
Half so fair as her I love,
Heaven knows how she'll receive me:
If she smiles I'm blest indeed;
If she frowns, I'm quickly freed;
Heaven knows she ne'er can grieve me.

II.

None can love her more than I,
Yet she ne'er shall make me die.
If my Flame can never warm her,
Lasting Beauty I'll adore,
I shall never love her more,
Cruelty will so deform her.

L. F. Very well: This is *Heartsfree's* Poetry without question.

Treb

Treb. Won't your Ladyship please to sing your self this Morning?

L. F. O Lord, Mr. *Treble*, my Cold is still so barbarous to refuse me that Pleasure: Ha, he, hem.

Treb. I'm very sorry for it, Madam: Methinks all Mankind shou'd turn Physicians for the Cure on't.

L. F. Why truly, to give Mankind their due, there's few that know me, but have offer'd their Remedy.

Treb. They have reason, Madam; for I know no body sings so near a Cherubim as your Ladyship.

L. F. What I do, I owe chiefly to your Skill and Care, Mr. *Treble*. People do flatter me indeed that I have a Voice, and a Je-ne-sçai-quoy in the Conduct of it, that will make Musick of any thing. And truly I begin to believe so, since what happen'd t'other night: Wou'd you think it, Mr. *Treble*? walking pretty late in the Park, (for I often walk late in the Park, Mr. *Treble*) a Whim took me to sing *Chevy-Chace*, and wou'd you believe it? Next morning I had three Copies of Verses, and six Billet-doux at my Levee upon it.

Treb. And without all dispute you deserv'd as many more, Madam. Are there any further Commands for your Ladyship's humble Servant?

L. F. Nothing more at this time, Mr. *Treble*. But I shall expect you here every Morning for this Month, to sing my little matter there to me. I'll reward you for your pains.

Treb. O Lord, Madam———

L. F. Good-morrow, sweet Mr. *Treble*.

Treb. Your Ladyship's most obedient Servant.

[Exit *Treb.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Will your Ladyship please to dine yet?

L. F. Yes, let 'em serve.

[Exit *Servants.*

Sure this *Heartfree* has bewitch'd me *Madamoiselle*.

You can't imagine how oddly he mix'd himself in my thought during my Rapture e'en now. I vow 'tis a thousand pities he is not more polish'd: Don't you think so?

Madam.

The Provok'd Wife.

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Madam. Matam, I tink it so great Pity, dat if I was in your Ladyship place, I take him home in my House, I lock him up in my Closet, and I never let him go till I teach him every thing dat fine Lary expect from fine Gentleman.

L. F. Why truly I believe I shou'd soon subdue his Brutality; for without doubt, he has a strange Penchant to grow fond of me, in spite of his Aversion to the Sex, else he wou'd never have taken so much pains about me. Lord, how proud some poor Creatures be of such a Conquest! But I alas, I don't know how to receive as a Favour, what I take to be so infinitely my due. But what shall I do to new-mould him, *Madamoiselle*? for till then he's my utter Aversion.

Madam. Matam, you must laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de redicule all he say and all he do.

L. F. Why truly, Satire has ever been of wondrous use to reform Ill-manners. Besides, 'tis my particular Talent to ridicule Folks. I can be severe, strangely severe, when I will, *Madamoiselle*—— Give me the Pen and Ink—— I find my self whimsical—— I'll write to him.

—— Or I'll let it alone, and be severe upon him that way. [*Sitting down to write, Rising up again.*]

—— Yet Active Severity is better than Passive. [*Sitting down.*]

—— 'Tis as good let it alone too; for every Lash I give him, perhaps he'll take for a Favour. [*Rising.*]

—— Yet 'tis a thousand pities so much Satire shou'd be lost. [*Sitting.*]

—— But if it shou'd have a wrong effect upon him, 'twou'd distract me. [*Rising.*]

—— Well, I must write tho after all. [*Sitting.*]

—— Or I'll let it alone, which is the same thing. [*Rising.*]

Madam. La voila determinee.

The End of the Second Act.

A C T

A C T III.

SCENE opens. *Sir John, Lady Brute, and Belinda rising from the Table.*

Sir J. **H**ERE take away the things; I expect Company. But first bring me a Pipe; I'll smoak.
[To a Servant.]

La. B. Lord, Sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty Custom.

Sir J. Prithee don't be impertinent.

B. to Lady B. I wonder who those are he expects this Afternoon?

La. B. I'd give the World to know: Perhaps 'tis Constant, he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I'm resolv'd I'll share the Visit.

Bel. We'll send for our Work and sit here.

La. B. He'll choak us with his Tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choak us when we are doing what we have a mind to. Lovewell!

Enter Lovewell.

Lov. Madam.

La. B. Here; bring my Cousin's Work and mine hither. [Exit Lovew. and re-enters with their Work.]

Sir J. Whu, Pox, can't you work somewhere else?

La. B. We shall be careful not to disturb you, Sir.

Bel. Your Pipe will make you too thoughtful, Uncle, if you were left alone, our Prittle-prattle will cure your Spleen.

Sir J. Will it so, Mrs. Pert? Now I believe it will so increase it, [Sitting and smoaking.]
I shall take my own House for a Paper-mill.

La. B. to Bel. aside.] Don't let's mind him; let him say what he will.

Sir

Sir J. A Woman's Tongue a Cure for the Spleen—
Oons—*aside.*] If a Man had got the Head-ach, they'd
be for applying the same Remedy.

La. B. You have done a great deal, *Belinda*, since
yesterday.

Bel. Yes, I have work'd very hard; how do you like
it?

La. B. O, 'tis the prettiest Fringe in the World.
Well, Cousin, you have the happiest Fancy. Prithee ad-
vise me about altering my Crimson Petticoat.

Sir J. A Pox o' your Petticoat; here's such a Prating,
a Man can't digest his own Thoughts for you.

La. B. Don't answer him.

[Aside.]

Well, what do you advise me?

Bel. Why really I would not alter it at all.
Methinks 'tis very pretty as it is.

La. B. Ay, that's true: But you know one grows
weary of the prettiest things in the World, when one has
had 'em long.

Sir J. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. Shall we provoke him a little?

La. B. With all my heart.

Belinda, Don't you long to be marry'd?

Bel. Why, there are some things in it I could like well
enough.

La. B. What do you think you shou'd dislike?

Bel. My Husband, a hundred to one else.

La. B. O ye wicked Wretch! Sure you don't speak as
you think.

Bel. Yes, I do: especially if he smoak'd Tobacco.

[He looks earnestly at 'em.]

La. B. Why that many times takes off worse Smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

La. B. So some Men will, to keep their Wives from
coming near 'em.

Bel. Then those Wives should cuckold 'em at a dis-
tance.

*[He rises in a fury, throws his Pipe at 'em, and drives
'em out. As they run off, Constant and Heartfree
enter. Lady Brute runs against Constant.]*

Sir

Sir J. Oons, get you gone up Stairs, you confederating Strumpet you, or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance.

La. B. O Lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us. Dear; dear Mr. *Constant*, save us. [Exeunt.

Sir J. I'll cuckold you, with a Pox.

Const. Heav'ns! Sir *John*, what's the matter?

Sir J. Sure, if Women had been ready created, the Devil, instead of being kick'd down into Hell, had been marry'd.

Heartf. Why, what new Plague have you found now?

Sir J. Why these two Gentlewomen did but hear me say, I expected you here this Afternoon; upon which, they presently resolv'd to take up the Room, o' purpose to plague me and my Friends.

Const. Was that all? Why, we shou'd have been glad of their Company.

Sir J. Then I should have been weary of yours: For I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoaking Tobacco too; and said, Men stunk. But I have a good mind—— to say something.

Const. No, nothing against the Ladies, pray.

Sir J. Split the Ladies. Come, will you sit down? Give us some Wine, Fellow:
You won't smook?

Const. No, nor drink neither at this time, I must ask your pardon.

Sir J. What this Mistrefs of yours runs in your head; I'll warrant it's some such squeamish Minx as my Wife, that's grown so dainty of late, she finds fault even with a dirty Shirt.

Heartf. That a Woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir J. Pox o' the Women, let's drink. Come, you shall take one Glas, tho' I send for a Box of Lozenges to sweeten your Mouth after it.

Const. Nay, if one Glas will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that Expence.

Sir

The Provok'd Wife.

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Sir J. Why that's honest. Fill some Wine, Sirrah : So, here's to you, Gentlemen—— A Wife's the Devil. To your being both married. *[They drink.]*

Heartf. O your most humble Servant, Sir.

Sir J. Well, how do you like my Wine?

Const. 'Tis very good indeed.

Heartf. 'Tis admirable.

Sir J. Then give us t'other Glafs.

Const. No, pray excuse us now : We'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir J. This one Glafs, and no more. Come, it shall be your Mistress's Health : And that's a great Compliment from me, I assure you.

Const. And 'tis a very obliging one to me : So give us the Glasses.

Sir J. So : let her live. *[Sir John coughs in the Glafs.]*

Heartf. And be kind.

Const. What's the matter ? Does it go the wrong way ?

Sir J. If I had Love enough to be jealous, I shou'd take this for an ill Omen : For I never drank my Wife's Health in my Life, but I puk'd in the Glafs.

Const. O she's too virtuous to make a reasonable Man jealous.

Sir J. Pox of her Virtue. If I cou'd but catch her Adulterating, I might be divorc'd from her by Law.

Heartf. And so pay her a yearly Pension, to be a distinguish'd Cuckold.

Enter Servant.

Sir, There's my Lord Rake, Colonel Bully, and some other Gentlemen at the *Blue-Posts*, desire your Company.

Sir J. Cod's so, we are to consult about playing the Devil to-night.

Heartf. Well, we won't hinder Business.

Sir J. Methinks I don't know how to leave you tho. But for once I must make bold. Or look you; may be the Conference mayn't last long : So if you'll wait

D

here

here half an hour, or an hour; if I don't come then
 — why then — I won't come at all.

Heartf. to Const.] A good modest Proposition truly.

Const. But let's accept on't however. Who knows
 what may happen? *[Aside.]*

Heartf. Well, Sir, to shew you how fond we are of
 your Company, we'll expect your return as long as we
 can.

Sir J. Nay, may be I mayn't stay at all: But Busi-
 ness, you know, must be done. So your Servant —
 Or hark you: If you have a mind to take a frisk with us,
 I have an Interest with my Lord, I can easily introduce
 you.

Const. We are much beholden to you; but for my
 part, I'm engag'd another way.

Sir J. What! To your Mistress, I'll warrant. Pri-
 thee leave your nasty Punk to entertain her self with
 her own lewd Thoughts, and make one with us to-
 night.

Const. Sir, 'tis Business that is to employ me.

Heartf. And me; and Business must be done, you
 know.

Sir J. Ay, Womens Business, tho the World were
 consum'd for't. *[Exit Sir John.]*

Const. Farewell, Beast: And now, my dear Friend,
 wou'd my Mistress be but as complaisant as some Men's
 Wives, who think it a piece of Good-Breeding to receive
 the Visits of their Husband's Friends in his Absence.

Heartf. Why for your sake I could forgive her, tho
 she should be so complaisant to receive something else
 in his absence. But what way shall we invent to see
 her?

Const. O ne'er hope it: Invention will prove as vain
 as Wishes.

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

Heartf. What do you think now, Friend?

Const. I think I shall swoon.

Heartf. I'll speak first then, whilst you fetch breath.

The Provok'd Wife.

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La. B. We think our selves oblig'd, Gentlemen, to come and return your Thanks for your Knight-Errantry. We were just upon being devour'd by the fiery Dragons.

Bel. Did not his Fumes almost knock you down, Gentlemen?

Heartf. Truly, Ladies, we did undergo some Hardships; and should have done more, if some greater Heroes than our selves had not diverted him.

Const. Tho I'm glad of the Service, you are pleas'd to say we have done you; yet I'm sorry we cou'd do it in no other way, than by making our selves privy to what you wou'd perhaps have kept a secret.

La. B. For Sir John's part, I suppose he design'd it no Secret, since he made so much Noise. And for my self, truly I am not much concern'd, since 'tis fallen only into this Gentleman's hands and yours; who, I have many Reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report any thing to my disadvantage.

Const. Your good Opinion, Madam, was what I fear'd I never could have merited.

La. B. Your Fears were vain then, Sir; for I am just to every-body.

Heartf. Prithee, Constant, what is't you do to get the Ladies good Opinions, for I'm a Novice at it?

Bel. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

Heartf. Yes, that I will with all my Soul, Madam.

Bel. Why then you must never be slovenly, never be out of humour, fare well and cry Roast-meat, smoak Tobacco, nor drink but when you are a-dry.

Heartf. That's hard.

Const. Nay, if you take his Bottle from him, you break his Heart, Madam.

Bel. Why, is it possible the Gentleman can love Drinking?

Heartf. Only by way of Antidote.

Bel. Against what, pray?

Heartf. Against Love, Madam.

La. B. Are you afraid of being in love, Sir?

Heartf. I shou'd, if there were any danger of it.

La. B. Pray, why so?

Heartf. Because I always had an aversion to being us'd like a Dog.

Bel. Why truly, Men in love are seldom us'd better.

La. B. But was you never in love, Sir?

Heartf. No, I thank Heav'n, Madam.

Bel. Pray where got you your Learning then?

Heartf. From other Peoples Expence.

Bel. That's being a Spunger, Sir, which is scarce honest: If you'd buy some Experience with your own Money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

Enter Footman.

Foot. Madam, here's my Lady Fancyful, to wait upon your Ladyship.

La. B. Shield me, kind Heaven: What an Inundation of Impertinence is here coming upon us!

Enter Lady Fancyful, who runs first to Lady Brute, then to Belinda, kissing 'em.

La. F. My dear Lady Brute, and sweet Belinda! methinks 'tis an Age since I saw you.

La. B. Yet 'tis but three Days; sure you have pass'd your Time very ill, it seems so long to you.

La. F. Why really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigu'd with the Addresses of unfortunate Gentlemen, that were it not for the Extravagancy of the Example, I shou'd e'en tear out these wicked Eyes with my own Fingers, to make both my self and Mankind easy. What think you on't, Mr. Heartfree, for I take you to be my faithful Adviser?

Heartf. Why truly, Madam—— I think —— every Project that is for the Good of Mankind, ought to be encourag'd.

La. F. Then I have your Consent, Sir.

Heartf. To do whatever you please, Madam.

La. F. You had a much more limited Complaisance this Morning, Sir. Would you believe it, Ladies? The Gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty Faults, in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of 'em.

Const.

The Provok'd Wife.

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Const. Why truly, Madam, my Friend there is apt to be something familiar with the Ladies.

La. F. He is indeed, Sir; but he's wondrous charitable with it: He has had the Goodness to design a Reformation, ev'n down to my Fingers-ends.

—'Twas thus, I think, Sir, you'd have had 'em stand—
My Eyes too he did not like:
How was't you would have directed 'em? Thus I think.

Opening her Fingers in an aukward manner.

[Staring at him.]

—Then there was something amiss in my Gait too: I don't know well how 'twas; but, as I take it, he would have had me walk like him. Pray, Sir, do me the Favour to take a turn or two about the Room, that the Company may see you—— He's fullen, Ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an Idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas much about this Figure in general, he would have moulded me to: But I was an obstinate Woman, and could not resolve to make my self Mistress of his Heart, by growing as aukward as his Fancy.

[She walks aukwardly about, staring and looking ungainly, then changes on a sudden to the extremity of her usual Affectation.]

Heartf. Just thus Women do, when they think we are in love with 'em, or when they are so with us.

[Here Constant and Lady B. talk together apart.]

La. F. 'Twould however be less Vanity for me to conclude the former, than you the latter, Sir.

Heartf. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude, is, That if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

La. F. Not by Over-fondness, upon my word, Sir. But pray let's stop here; for you are so much govern'd by Instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. Aside.] Now I'm sure she's fond of him: I'll try to make her jealous.

Well for my part, I should be glad to find some-body would be so free with me, that I might know my Faults, and mend 'em.

The Provok'd Wife.

La. F. Then pray let me recommend this Gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be Surety for him, That upon a very limited Encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended Impudence on his.

Heartf. I thank you, Madam, for your Recommendation: But hating Idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a Place where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your Ladyship, because I knew you'd find me constant Employment.

La. F. I told you he'd be rude, *Belinda*.

Bel. O, a little Bluntness is a sign of Honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it. So, Sir, if you have no other Exceptions to my Service, but the fear of being idle in it, you may venture to list your self: I shall find you Work, I warrant you.

Heartf. Upon those Terms I engage, Madam; and this (with your leave) I take for Earnest.

[Offering to kiss her Hand.]

Bel. Hold there, Sir; I'm none of your Earnest-givers. But if I'm well serv'd, I give good Wages, and pay punctually.

[*Heartf. and Bel. seem to continue talking familiarly.*]

La. F. Aside.] I don't like this jesting between 'em——Methinks the Fool begins to look as if he were in earnest——but then he must be a Fool indeed.

——Lard, what a difference there is between me and her.

[*Looking at Bel. scornfully.*]

How I shou'd despise such a thing, if I were a Man!

——What a Nose she has——What a Chin——

What a Neck——Then her Eyes——And the worst kissing Lips in the Universe——No, no, he can never like her, that's positive——Yet I can't suffer 'em together any longer.

Mr. Heartfree, do you know that you and I must have no Quarrel for all this? I can't forbear being a little severe now and then: But Women, you know, may be allowed any thing.

Heartf. Up to a certain Age, Madam.

La.

The Provok'd Wife.

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La. F. Which I'm not yet past, I hope.

Heartf. *aside.*] Nor never will, I dare swear.

La. F. *to Lady B.* Come, Madam, will your Ladyship be Witness to our Reconciliation?

La. B. You agree then at last.

Heartf. *sightingly.*] We forgive.

La. F. *aside.*] That was a cold ill-natur'd Reply.

La. B. Then there's no Challenges sent between you?

Heartf. Not from me, I promise. [*Aside to Constant.*] But that's more than I'll do for her, for I know she can as well be damn'd as forbear writing to me.

Const. That I believe. But I think we had best be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heartf. With all my heart.

Const. Ladies, we are your humble Servants. I see Sir John is quite engag'd, 'twould be in vain to expect him. Come Heartfree. [*Exit.*]

Heartf. Ladies, your Servant. [*To Belinda.*] I hope, Madam, you won't forget our Bargain; I'm to say what I please to you. [*Exit Heartfree.*]

Bel. Liberty of Speech entire, Sir.

La. F. *aside.*] Very pretty truly—— But how the Blockhead went out: Languishing at her; and not a Look toward me—— Well, Churchmen may talk, but Miracles are not ceas'd. For 'tis more than natural, such a rude Fellow as he, and such a little Impertinent as she, shou'd be capable of making a Woman of my Sphere uneasy.

But I can bear her sight no longer—— methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet.

I must home, and study Revenge.

[*To Lady B.*] Madam, your humble Servant; I must take my leave.

La. B. What, going already, Madam?

La. F. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen Visits to return this Afternoon: So you see I am importun'd by the Women as well as the Men.

Bel. *aside.*] And she's quits with them both.

La.

The Provok'd Wife.

La. F. going.] Nay, you shan't go one step out of the Room.

La. B. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.

La. F. No, sweet Lady *Brute*, you know I swoon at Ceremony.

La. B. Pray give me leave.

La. F. You know I won't.

La. B. Indeed I must.

La. F. Indeed you shan't.

La. B. Indeed I will.

La. F. Indeed you shan't.

La. B. Indeed I will.

La. F. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed you shan't. [*Exit Lady Fan. running. They follow.*

Re-enter Lady Brute, sola.

This impertinent Woman has put me out of humour for a Fortnight — What an agreeable Moment has her foolish Visit interrupted — Lord, how like a Torrent Love flows into the Heart, when once the Sluce of Desire is open'd! Good Gods! What a pleasure there is, in doing what we should not do!

Re-enter Constant.

Ha! here again?

Const. Tho the renewing my Visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your Pardon for it, Madam, when you know I only left the Room, lest the Lady who was here shou'd have been as malicious in her Remarks, as she's foolish in her Conduct.

La. B. He who has Discretion enough to be tender of a Woman's Reputation, carries a Virtue about him may atone for a great many Faults.

Const. If it has a Title to atone for any, its Pretensions must needs be strongest, where the Crime is Love. I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the Attempt I have made upon your Heart, since my Enterprize has been a Secret to all the World but your self.

La. B. Secrecy indeed in Sins of this kind, is an Argument of weight to lessen the Punishment; but nothing's a Plea for a Pardon entire, without a sincere Repentance.

Const.

Const. If Sincerity in Repentance consists in Sorrow for offending, no Cloyster ever inclos'd so true a Penitent as I should be. But I hope it cannot be reckon'd an Offence to Love, where 'tis a Duty to adore.

La. B. 'Tis an Offence, a great one, where it wou'd rob a Woman of all she ought to be ador'd for, her Virtue.

Const. Virtue! — Virtue, alas, is no more like the thing that's call'd so, than 'tis like Vice it self. Virtue consists in Goodness, Honour, Gratitude, Sincerity, and Pity; and not in peevish, snarling, strait-lac'd Chastity. True Virtue, wheresoe'er it moves, still carries an intrinsic Worth about it, and is in every Place, and in each Sex, of equal Value. So is not Continence, you see: That Phantom of Honour, which Men in every Age have so contemn'd, they have thrown it amongst the Women to scrabble for.

La. B. If it be a thing of so very little Value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your Wives and Daughters?

Const. We recommend it to our Wives, Madam, because we wou'd keep 'em to our selves; and to our Daughters, because we wou'd dispose of 'em to others.

La. B. 'Tis then of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of them without it.

Const. That Importance, Madam, lies in the Humour of the Country, not in the Nature of the Thing.

La. B. How do you prove that, Sir?

Const. From the Wisdom of a neighbouring Nation in a contrary Practice. In Monarchies things go by Whimsy, but Commonwealths weigh all things in the Scale of Reason.

La. B. I hope we are not so very light a People, to bring up Fashions without some ground.

Const. Pray what does your Ladyship think of a powder'd Coat for deep Mourning?

La. B. I think, Sir, your Sophistry has all the Effect that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Const. I'm sorry for it.

La. B. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Const.

Const. Pray why ?

La. B. Because if you expected more from it, you have a worse Opinion of my Understanding than I desire you should have.

Const. aside.] I comprehend her : She would have me set a Value upon her Chastity, that I might think my self the more oblig'd to her when she makes me a Present of it.

To her.] I beg you will believe I did but rally, Madam ; I know you judge too well of Right and Wrong, to be deceiv'd by Arguments like those. I hope you'll have so favourable an Opinion of my understanding too, to believe the thing call'd Virtue as worth enough with me, to pass for an eternal Obligation where'er 'tis sacrific'd.

La. B. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Const. Yes ; the making the Man you love your everlasting Debtor.

La. B. When Debtors once have borrow'd all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow shy of their Creditors Company.

Const. That, Madam, is only when they are forc'd to borrow of Usurers, and not of a generous Friend. Let us chuse our Creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful to shun 'em.

La. B. What think you of Sir *John*, Sir ? I was his free Choice.

Const. I think he's married, Madam.

La. B. Does Marriage then exclude Men from your Rule of Constancy ?

Const. It does. Constancy's a brave, free, haughty, generous Agent, that cannot buckle to the Chains of Wedlock. There's a poor sordid Slavery in Marriage, that turns the flowing Tide of Honour, and sinks us to the lowest Ebb of Infamy. 'Tis a corrupted Soil ; Ill-Nature, Avarice, Sloth, Cowardice, and Dirt are all its Product.

La. B. Have you no Exceptions to this general Rule, as well as to t'other ?

Const.

Const. Yes; I would (after all) be an Exception to it my self, if you were free in Power and Will to make me so.

La. B. Compliments are well plac'd, where 'tis impossible to lay hold on 'em.

Const. I wou'd to Heaven 'twere possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see it is no Compliment at all. But since you are already dispos'd of beyond Redemption, to one who does not know the Value of the Jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you wou'd not think him greatly wrong'd, tho it should sometimes be look'd on by a Friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

La. B. If looking on't alone would serve his turn, the wrong perhaps might not be very great.

Const. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good Security to bring it home again at night?

La. B. Small Security I fancy might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Const. Then where's the Injury to the Owner?

La. B. 'Tis Injury to him if he think it one. For if Happiness be seated in the Mind, Unhappiness must be so too.

Const. Here I close with you, Madam, and draw my conclusive Argument from your own Position: If the Injury lie in the Fancy, there needs nothing but Secrecy to prevent the Wrong.

La. B. [going.] A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more Arguments in its behalf.

Const. [following her.] But, Madam——

La. B. But, Sir, 'tis my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a Visit.

Const. [catching her Hand.] By Heaven you shall not stir, till you give me hopes that I shall see you again at some more convenient Time and Place.

La. B. I give you just hopes enough—— [breaking from him] to get loose from you; and that's all I can afford you at this time.

[Exit running.]

Constant

Constant solus.

Now by all that's great and good, she's a charming Woman. In what Extasy of Joy she has left me! For she gave me Hope; did she not say she gave me Hope? — Hope! Ay; what Hope — enough to make me let her go — Why that's enough in Conscience. Or, no matter how 'twas spoke; Hope was the Word; it came from her, and it was said to me.

Enter Heartfree.

Ha, *Heartfree*! Thou hast done me noble Service in prattling to the young Gentlewoman without there; come to my Arms, thou venerable Bawd, and let me squeeze thee (*Embracing him eagerly*) as a new Pair of Stays does a fat Country Girl, when she's carried to Court to stand for a Maid of Honour.

Heartf. Why, what the Devil's all this Rapture for?

Const. Rapture! There's ground for Rapture, Man; there's Hopes, my *Heartfree*; Hopes, my Friend.

Heartf. Hopes! of what?

Const. Why, Hopes that my Lady and I together (for 'tis more than one body's Work) should make Sir John a Cuckold.

Heartf. Prithee, what did she say to thee?

Const. Say? what did she not say? she said that — says she — she said — Zoons, I don't know what she said: But she look'd as if she said every thing I'd have her; and so if thou'lt go to the Tavern, I'll treat thee with any thing that Gold can buy: I'll give all my Silver amongst the Drawers, make a Bonfire before the Door, say the Plenipo's have sign'd the Peace, and the Bank of England's grown honest. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE opens; Lord Rake, Sir John,
&c. at a Table, drinking.

All. Huzza!

Ld. R. Come, Boys, charge again — So — Confusion to all Order. Here's Liberty of Conscience.

All. Huzza!

Ld. R. I'll sing you a Song I made this morning to this purpose.

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Sir J. 'Tis wicked, I hope.

Col. B. Don't my Lord tell you he made it?

Sir J. Well then, let's ha't.

Lord Rake sings.

I.

WHAT a Pother of late
Have they kept in the State
About setting our Consciences free?
A Bottle has more
Dispensations in store,
Than the King and the State can decree.

II.

When my Head's full of Wine,
I o'erflow with Design,
And know no Penal Laws that can curb me:
Whate'er I devise,
Seems good in my Eyes,
And Religion ne'er dares to disturb me.

III.

No saucy Remorse
Intrudes in my Course,
Nor impertinent Notions of Evil;
So there's Claret in store,
In peace I've my Whore,
And in peace I jog on to the Devil.

All sing. So there's Claret, &c.

Ld. R. (Rep.) And in Peace I jog on to the Devil.

Ld. R. Well, how do you like it, Gentlemen?

All. O, admirable!

Sir J. I wou'd not give a Fig for a Song that is not
full of Sin and Impudence.

Ld. R. Then my Muse is to your Taste.

But drink away; the Night steals upon us; we shall want
time to be leud in. Hey, Page, sally out, Sirrah, and
see what's doing in the Camp; we'll beat up their Quar-
ters presently.

E

Page.

Page. I'll bring your Lordship an exact account.

[Exit *Page.*]

Ld. R. Now let the Spirit of Clary go round.

Fill me a Brimmer. Here's to our Forlorn Hope.

Courage, Knight; Victory attends you.

Sir J. And Laurels shall crown me; drink away, and be damn'd.

Ld. R. Again, Boys; t'other Glass, and damn Morality.

Sir J. [*drunk,*] Ay ——— damn Morality ——— and damn the Watch. And let the Constable be married.

All. Huzza!

Re-enter Page.

Ld. R. How are the Streets inhabited, Sirrah?

Page. My Lord, it's Sunday-night, they are full of drunken Citizens.

Ld. R. Along then, Boys, we shall have a Feast.

Col. B. Along, noble Knight.

Sir J. Ay ——— along *Bully*; and he that says Sir John Brute is not as drunk and as religious as the drunkenest Citizen of them all ——— is a Lyar, and the Son of a Whore.

Col. B. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a free-born *Englishman*.

Sir J. What's that to you, Sir, whether I am an *Englishman* or a *Frenchman*?

Col. B. Zoons, you are not angry, Sir?

Sir J. Zoons, I am angry, Sir ——— for if I'm a free-born *Englishman*, what have you to do, even to talk of my Privileges?

Ld. R. Why, prithee, Knight, don't quarrel here, leave private Animosities to be decided by Day-light, let the Night be employ'd against the publick Enemy.

Sir J. My Lord, I respect you because you are a Man of Quality; But I'll make that Fellow know, I am within a Hair's-breadth as absolute by my Privileges, as the King of *France* is by his Prerogative. He by his Prerogative takes Money where it is not his due; I by my

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my Privilege refuse paying it where I owe it. Liberty
and Property, and Old England, Huzza!

[*Ex. Sir John reeling,
all following him.*]

All. Huzza!

SCENE, *A Bed-Chamber.*

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

La. B. Sure it's late, *Belinda*; I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near Twelve. Will you go to Bed?

La. B. To Bed, my Dear? And by that time I am
fallen into a sweet Sleep (or perhaps a sweet Dream,
which is better and better) *Sir John* will come home
roaring drunk, and be overjoy'd he finds me in a Condi-
tion to be disturb'd.

Bel. O you need not fear him, he's in for all nights.
The Servants say he is gone to drink with my Lord *Rake*.

La. B. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable
Company should part presently. What Hogs Men turn,
Belinda, when they grow weary of Women?

Bel. And what Owls they are, whilst they are fond of
'em?

La. B. But that we may forgive well enough, because
they are so upon our accounts.

Bel. We ought to do so indeed, but 'tis a hard matter.
For when a Man is really in love, he looks so unsuffe-
rably silly, that tho a Woman lik'd him well enough be-
fore, she has then much ado to endure the Sight of him:
And this I take to be the Reason why Lovers are so ge-
nerally ill used.

La. B. Well, I own now, I'm well enough pleas'd to
see a Man look like an Ass for me.

Bel. Ay, I'm pleas'd he shou'd look like an Ass too
— that is, I'm pleas'd with my self for making him
look so.

La. B. Nay, truly, I think if he'd find some other
way to express his Passion, 'twou'd be more to his ad-
vantage.

Bel. Yes; for then a Woman might like his Passion, and him too.

La. B. Yet, *Belinda*, after all, a Woman's Life would be but a dull Business, if 'twere not for Men; and Men that can look like Asses too. We shou'd never blame Fate for the shortness of our Days; our time would hang wretchedly upon our hands.

Bel. Why, truly, they do help us off with a good share on't: For were there no Men in the World, o'my Conscience, I shou'd be no longer a dressing than I'm a saying my Prayers; nay, tho it were Sunday: For you know one may go to Church without Stays on.

La. B. But don't you think Emulation might do something? for every Woman you see desires to be finer than her Neighbour.

Bel. That's only that the Man may like her better than her Neighbour. No; if there were no Men, adieu fine Petticoats, we shou'd be weary of wearing 'em.

La. B. And adieu Plays, we should be weary of seeing 'em.

Bel. Adieu *Hide-Park*, the Dust wou'd choke us.

La. B. Adieu *St. James's*, walking wou'd tire us.

Bel. Adieu *London*, the Smoke wou'd stifle us.

La. B. And Adieu going to Church, for Religion wou'd ne'er prevail with us.

Both. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Our Confession is so very hearty, sure we merit Absolution.

La. B. Not unless we go thro' with't, and confess all. So, prithee, for the ease of our Consciences, let's hide nothing.

Bel. Agreed.

La. B. Why then I confess, that I love to sit in the Forefront of a Box; for if one sits behind, there's two Acts gone perhaps before one's found out. And when I am there, if I perceive the Men whispering and looking upon me, you must know I cannot for my Life forbear thinking they talk to my advantage. And that sets a thousand little trickling Vanities on foot——

Bel. Just my Case for all the World; but go on.

La.

The Provok'd Wife.

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La. B. I watch with Impatience for the next Jest in the Play, that I might laugh and shew my white Teeth. If the Poet has been dull, and the Jest be long a coming, I pretend to whisper one to my Friend; and from thence fall into a little small Discourse, in which I take occasion to shew my Face in all Humours, brisk, pleas'd, serious, melancholy, languishing — Not that what we say to one another causes any of these Alterations. But——

Bel. Don't trouble your self to explain: For if I'm not mistaken, you and I have had some of these necessary Dialogues before now, with the same Intention.

La. B. Why, I'll swear, *Belinda*, some People do give strange agreeable Airs to their Faces in speaking. Tell me true——Did you never practise in the Glasse?

Bel. Why, did you?

La. B. Yes, Faith, many a time.

Bel. And I too, I own it; both how to speak my self, and how to look when others speak. But my Glasse and I could never yet agree what Face I should make, when they come blurt out with a nasty thing in a Play: For all the Men presently look upon the Women, that's certain; so laugh we must not, tho our Stays burst for't, because that's telling Truth, and owning we understand the Jest. And to look serious is so dull, when the whole House is a laughing.

La. B. Besides, that looking serious does really betray our Knowledge in the matter, as much as laughing with the Company wou'd do: For if we did not understand the thing, we shou'd naturally do like other People.

Bel. For my part I always take that occasion to blow my Nose.

La. B. You must blow your Nose half off then at some Plays.

Bel. Why don't some Reformer or other beat the Poet for't?

La. B. Because he is not so sure of our private Approbation; as of our publick Thanks. Well, sure there is not upon Earth so impertinent a thing as Women's Modesty.

Bel. Yes; Men's Fantasque, that obliges us to it.

If we quit our Modesty, they say we lose our Charms; and yet they know that very Modesty is Affectation, and rail at our Hypocrisy.

La. B. Thus one would think 'twere a hard matter to please 'em, Niece: yet our kind Mother Nature has given us something that makes amends for all. Let our Weakness be what it will, Mankind will still be weaker; and whilst there is a World, 'tis Woman that will govern it.

But prithee one word of poor *Constant* before we go to bed, if it be but to furnish matter for Dreams: I dare swear he's talking of me now, or thinking of me at least, tho it be in the middle of his Prayers.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleas'd to make him a good round Advance to-day, Madam.

La. B. Why, I have e'en plagu'd him enough to satisfy any reasonable Woman: He has besieg'd me these two years to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieg'd you two Years more, he'd be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you at last.

La. B. That may be; but I'm afraid the Town won't be able to hold out much longer: for, to confess the Truth to you, *Belinda*, the Garison begins to grow murinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate, the better.

La. B. Yet, methinks, I would fain stay a little longer to see you fix'd too, that we might start together, and see who cou'd love longest. What, think you, if *Heartfree* shou'd have a month's mind to you?

Bel. Why Faith I cou'd almost be in love with him for despising that foolish affected Lady *Fancyful*; but I'm afraid he's too cold ever to warm himself by my Fire.

La. B. Then he deserves to be froze to death. Wou'd I were a Man, for your sake, dear Rogue. [*Kissing her.*]

Bel. You'd wish your self a Woman again for your own, or the Men are mistaken.

But if I cou'd make a Conquest of this Son of *Bacchus*, and rival his *Bottle*, what shou'd I do with him?

He

He has no Fortune, I can't marry him ; and sure you wou'd not have me commit Fornication.

La. B. Why, if you did, Child, 'twou'd be but a good friendly part ; if 'twere only to keep me in countenance whilst I commit—— you know what.

Bel. Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I may perhaps find some other, as much to your Satisfaction. But pray how shall we contrive to see these Blades again quickly ?

La. B. We must e'en have recourse to the old way ; make 'em an Appointment 'twixt Jest and Earnest, 'twill look like a Frolick, and that you know's a very good thing to save a Woman's Blushes.

Bel. You advise well ; but where shall it be ?

La. B. In *Spring-Garden*, but they shan't know their Women, till their Women pull off their Masques ; for a Surprise is the most agreeable thing in the World : And I find my self in a very good Humour, ready to do 'em any good turn I can think on.

Bel. Then pray write 'em the necessary Billet, without farther delay.

La. B. Let's go into your Chamber, then, and whilst you say your Prayers, I'll do it, Child. [Exit.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *Covent-Garden.*

Enter Lord Rake, Sir John, &c. with Swords drawn.

Ld. R. **I**S the Dog dead ?

Bully. No, damn him, I heard him wheeze.

Ld. R. How the Witch his Wife howl'd ?

Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the Watch presently.

Ld. R. Appear, Knight, then ; come you have a good Cause to fight for, there's a Man murder'd.

Sir

Sir J. Is there? Then let his Ghost be satisfy'd, for I'll sacrifice a Constable to it presently, and burn his Body upon his wooden Chair.

Enter a Taylor, with a Bundle under his Arm.

Bully. How now; what have we got here? a Thief.

Taylor. No, an't please you, I'm no Thief.

Ld. R. That we'll see presently: Here; let the General examine him.

Sir J. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred Pound I find him guilty in spite of his Teeth——for he looks——like a——sneaking Rascal.

Come, Sirrah, without Equivocation or mental Reservation, tell me of what Opinion you are, and what Calling; for by them——I shall guess at your Morals.

Tayl. An't please you, I'm a Dissenting Journeyman Taylor.

Sir J. Then, Sirrah, you love Lying by your Religion, and Theft by your Trade: And so, that your Punishment may be suitable to your Crimes——I'll have you first gagg'd——and then hang'd.

Tayl. Pray, good worthy Gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest Man, and a good Workman, tho I say it, that shou'd not say it.

Sir J. No words, Sirrah, but attend your Fate.

Ld. R. Let me see what's in that Bundle.

Tayl. An't please you, it is the Doctor of the Parish's Gown.

Ld. R. The Doctor's Gown!——Hark you, Knight, you won't stick at abusing the Clergy, will you?

Sir J. No, I'm drunk, and I'll abuse any thing——but my Wife; and her I name——with Reverence.

Ld. R. Then you shall wear this Gown, whilst you charge the Watch: That tho the Blows fall upon you, the Scandal may light upon the Church.

Sir J. A generous Design——by all the Gods——give it me.

[Takes the Gown, and puts it on.]

Tayl. O dear Gentlemen, I shall be quite undone, if you take the Gown.

Sir J. Retire, Sirrah; and since you carry off your Skin——go home, and be happy.

Tayl.

The Provok'd Wife.

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Tayl. [*pausing.*] I think I had e'en as good follow the Gentleman's friendly Advice; for if I dispute any longer, who knows but the Whim may take him to case me? These Courtiers are fuller of Tricks than they are of Money; they'll sooner cut a Man's Throat, than pay his Bill. [*Exit Taylor.*]

Sir J. So, how d'ye like my Shapes now?

Ld. R. This will do to a Miracle; he looks like a Bishop going to the Holy War. But to your Arms, Gentlemen, the Enemy appears.

Enter Constable and Watch.

Watchm. Stand! who goes there? Come before the Constable.

Sir J. The Constable's a Rascal—— and you are the Son of a Whore.

Watchm. A good civil Answer for a Parson, truly!

Constable. Methinks, Sir, a Man of your Coat might set a better Example.

Sir J. Sirrah, I'll make you know—— there are Men of my Coat can set as bad Examples—— as you can do, you Dog you.

[*Sir John strikes the Constable. They knock him down, disarm him, and seize him. Lord R. etc. run away.*]

Constable. So, we have secur'd the Parson however.

Sir J. Blood, and Blood—— and Blood.

Watchm. Lord have mercy upon us! How the wicked Wretch raves of Blood. I'll warrant he has been murdering some body to-night.

Sir J. Sirrah, there's nothing got by Murder but a Halter: My Talent lies towards Drunkenness and Simony.

Watchm. Why that now was spoke like a Man of Parts, Neighbours; it's pity he shou'd be so disguis'd.

Sir J. You lye—— I'm not disguis'd; for I am drunk barefac'd.

Watchm. Look you there again—— This is a mad Parson, Mr. Constable; I'll lay a Pot of Ale upon's Head, he's a good Preacher.

Constable.

Constable. Come, Sir, out of Respect to your Calling, I shan't put you into the Round-house; but we must secure you in our Drawing-Room till Morning, that you may do no Mischief. So, come along.

Sir J. You may put me where you will, Sirrah, now you have overcome me—— But if I can't do Mischief, I'll think of Mischief—— in spite of your Teeth, you Dog you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, A Bed-Chamber.

Enter Heartfree solus.

What the Plague ails me? — Love? No, I thank you for that, my Heart's Rock still——

Yet 'tis *Belinda* that disturbs me; that's positive.

—— Well, what of all that; * Must I love her for being troublesome? at that rate I might love all the Women I meet, I gad. But hold! — tho I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me because I love her—— Ay, that may be, faith. I have dreamt of her, that's certain——

Well, so I have of my Mother; therefore what's that to the purpose? Ay, but *Belinda* runs in my Mind waking—— And so does many a damn'd thing, that I don't care a Farthing for—— Methinks tho, I would fain be talking to her, and yet I have no Business——

Well, am I the first Man, that has had a Mind to do an impertinent thing?

Enter Constant.

Const. How now, *Heartfree*? What makes you up and dress'd so soon? I thought none but Lovers quarrel'd with their Beds; I expected to have found you snooring, as I us'd to do.

Heartf. Why faith, Friend, 'tis the Care I have of your Affairs, that makes me so thoughtful; I have been studying all Night, how to bring your matter about with *Belinda*.

Const. With *Belinda*!

Heartf.

Heartf. With my Lady, I mean : And faith I have mighty hopes on't. Sure you must be very well satisfy'd with her Behaviour to you yesterday ?

Const. So well, that nothing but a Lover's Fears can make me doubt of Success. But what can this sudden Change proceed from ?

Heartf. Why, you saw her Husband beat her, did you not ?

Const. That's true : A Husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his Wife, Methinks she shou'd e'en have cuckolded him upon the very spot, to shew that after the Battle she was master of the Field.

Heartf. A Council of War of Women wou'd infallibly have advis'd her to't. But, I confess, so agreeable a Woman as *Belinda* deserves better Usage.

Const. *Belinda* again !

Heartf. My Lady, I mean : What a Pox makes me blunder so to-day ? [*Aside.*] A Plague of this treacherous Tongue.

Const. Prithee look upon me seriously, *Heartfree*—— Now answer me directly : Is it my Lady, or *Belinda*, employs your careful Thoughts thus ?

Heartf. My Lady, or *Belinda* !

Const. In Love ; by this Light, in Love.

Heartf. In Love !

Const. Nay, ne'er deny it ; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the Jest sit heavier about thee. My dear Friend, I give thee much Joy.

Heartf. Why prithee, you won't persuade me to it, will you ?

Const. That she's Mistress of your Tongue, that's plain ; and I know you are so honest a Fellow, your Tongue and Heart always go together.

But how ? but how the Devil ? Pha, ha, ha, ha——

Heartf. Hey day : Why sure you don't believe it in earnest ?

Const. Yes I do, because I see you deny it in jest.

Heartf. Nay, but look you *Ned*—— a—— deny in jest—— a—— gadzooks, you know I say—— a——

a———when a Man denies a thing in jest——— a———

Const. Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Heartf. Nay, then we shall have it: What because a Man stumbles at a word: Did you never make a Blunder?

Const. Yes, for I am in Love, I own it.

Heartf. Then, so am I———

Now laugh till thy Soul's glutted with Mirth.

[*Embracing him.*

But, dear *Constant*, don't tell the Town on't.

Const. Nay then, 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a Confession.

But tell us a little, *Jack*, by what new-invented Arms, has this mighty Stroke been given?

Heartf. E'en by that unaccountable Weapon, call'd, *Je-ne-say-quoy*: For every thing that can come within the Verge of Beauty, I have seen it with Indifference.

Const. So in few Words then; the *Je-ne-say-quoy* has been too hard for the quilted Petticoat.

Heartf. I gad, I think the *Je-ne-say-quoy*, is in the quilted Petticoat; at least 'tis certain, I ne'er think on't without——— a——— a *Je-ne-say-quoy* in every Part about me.

Const. Well, but have all your Remedies lost their Vertue? have you turn'd her In-side out yet?

Heartf. I dare not so much as think on't.

Const. But don't the two Yeats Fatigue I have had, discourage you?

Heartf. Yes: I dread what I foresee; yet cannot quit the Enterprize. Like some Soldiers, whose Courage dwells more in their Honour, than their Nature: On they go, tho the Body trembles at what the Soul makes it undertake.

Const. Nay, if you expect your Mistress will use you, as your Profanations against her Sex deserve, you tremble justly.

But how do you intend to proceed, Friend?

Heartf. Thou know'st I'm but a Novice; be friendly and advise me.

Const.

Const. Why look you then ; I'd have you—— Sere-
nade and a —— write a Song—— Go to Church ; Look
like a Fool—— Be very Officious ; Ogle, Write and
Lead out : And who knows, but in a Year or two's time,
you may be—— call'd a troublesome Puppy, and sent
about your Business ?

Heartf. That's hard.

Const. Yet thus it oft falls out with Lovers, Sir.

Heartf. Pox on me for making one of the Number.

Const. Have a care : Say no saucy things ; 'twill but
augment your Crime ; and if your Mistress hears on't,
increase your Punishment.

Heartf. Prithee say something then to encourage me,
you know I help'd you in your Distress.

Const. Why then to encourage you to Perseverance,
that you may be thorowly ill us'd for your Offences ;
I'll put you in mind, That even the coyest Ladies of 'em
all are made up of Desires, as well as we ; and tho'
they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last.
For that thundering Engineer, Nature, do's make such
havock in the Town, they must surrender at long run,
or perish in their own Flames.

Enter a Footman.

Sir, There's a Porter without with a Letter ; he desires
to give it into your own hands.

Const. Call him in.

Enter Porter.

Const. What Jo ! Is it thee ?

Porter. An't please you, Sir, I was order'd to deliver
this into your own hands, by two well-shap'd Ladies,
at the *New-Exchange*. I was at your Honour's Lodg-
ings, and your Servants sent me hither.

Const. 'Tis well. Are you to carry any Answer ?

Porter. No, my noble Master. They gave me my
Orders, and whip, they were gone, like a Maiden-head
at Fifteen.

Const. Very well ; there.

[Gives him Money.]

Porter. God bless your Honour.

[Exit Porter.]

Const. Now let's see, what honest trusty Jo has brought us.

Reads.]

If you and your Play-fellow can spare time from your Business and Devotions; don't fail to be at Spring-Garden about Eight in the Evening. You'll find nothing there but Women, so you need bring no other Arms than what you usually carry about you.

So, Play-fellow: Here's something to stay your Stomach, till your Mistress's Dish is ready for you.

Heartf. Some of our old batter'd Acquaintance. I won't go, not I.

Const. Nay, that you can't avoid: There's Honour in the Case; 'tis a Challenge, and I want a Second.

Heartf. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you; for I'm so disheartned by this Wound *Belinda* has given me, I don't think I shall have Courage enough to draw my Sword.

Const. O, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you find Sword enough for such Enemies as we have to deal withal. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter Constable, &c. with Sir John.

Constab. Come along, Sir; I thought to have let you slip this Morning, because you were a Minister; but you are as drunk and as abusive as ever. We'll see what the Justice of the Peace will say to you.

Sir J. And you shall see what I'll say to the Justice of the Peace, Sirrah. *[They knock at the Door.]*

Enter Servant.

Constab. Pray acquaint his Worship, we have got an unruly Parson here: We are unwilling to expose him, but don't know what to do with him:

Serv. I'll acquaint my Master. *[Exit Servant.]*

Sir J. You—— Constable—— What damn'd Justice is this?

Const. One that will take care of you, I warrant you.

Enter

The Provok'd Wife.

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Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what's the Disorder here?

Constab. An't please your Worship——

Sir J. Let me speak, and be damn'd : I'm a Divine, and can unfold Mysteries better than you can do.

Just. Sadness, Sadness; a Minister so over-taken ! Pray, Sir, give the Constable leave to speak, and I'll hear you very patiently ; I assure you Sir, I will.

Sir J. Sir—— You are a very Civil Magistrate : Your most humble Servant.

Constab. An't please your Worship then ; he has attempted to beat the Watch to-night, and swore——

Sir J. You lye.

Just. Hold, pray Sir, a little.

Sir J. Sir, your very humble Servant.

Constab. Indeed Sir, he came at us without any Provocation, call'd us Whores and Rogues, and laid us on with a great Quarter-staff. He was in my Lord *Rake's* Company : They have been playing the Devil to-night.

Just. Hem—— Hem—— Pray Sir—— May you be Chaplain to my Lord?

Sir J. Sir—— I presume—— I may if I w——

Just. My meaning, Sir, is—— Are you so?

Sir J. Sir—— You mean very well.

Just. He hem—— hem—— Under favour, Sir, pray answer me directly.

Sir J. Under favour, Sir—— Do you use to answer directly when you are drunk?

Just. Good lack, good lack : Here's nothing to be got from him. Pray Sir, may I crave your Name?

Sir J. Sir—— My Name's—— [*He hiccops.* Hiccop, Sir.

Just. Hiccop? Doctor Hiccop. I have known a great many Country Parsons of that Name, especially down in the Fenns.

Pray where do you live, Sir?

Sir J. Here—— and there, Sir.

Just. Why, what a strange Man is this? Where do you preach, Sir? Have you any Cure?

Sir J. Sir—— I have—— a very good Cure—— for a Clap, at your Service.

Just. Lord have Mercy upon us.

Sir J. *Aside.*] This Fellow does ask so many impertinent Questions, I believe, I gad, 'tis the Justice's Wife in the Justice's Clothes.

Just. Mr. Constable, I vow and protest, I don't know what to do with him.

Constab. Truly he has been but a troublesome Guest to us all Night.

Just. I think, I had e'en best let him go about his Business, for I'm unwilling to expose him.

Constab. E'en what your Worship thinks fit.

Sir J. Sir—— not to interrupt Mr. Constable, I have a small Favour to ask.

Just. Sir, I open both my Ears to you.

Sir J. Sir, your very humble Servant. I have a little urgent Business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the Favour of you to bring Matters to a Conclusion.

Just. Sir, if I were sure that Business were not to commit more Disorders, I wou'd release you.

Sir J. None—— By my Priesthood.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge him.

Sir J. Sir, your very humble Servant. If you please to accept of a Bottle——

Just. I thank you kindly, Sir; but I never drink in a Morning. Good-buy to ye, Sir, good-buy to ye.

Sir J. Good-buy t'ye, good Sir. [*Exit Justice.*]

So—— now, Mr. Constable, Shall you and I go pick up a Whore together?

Const. No, thank you, Sir; my Wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable Man.

Sir J. *Aside.*] He, he, he, he, he—— the Fool is married then. Well, you won't go?

Const. Not I, truly.

Sir J. Then I'll go by my self; and you and your Wife may be damn'd. [*Exit Sir John.*]

Constable gazing after him.]

Why God-a-mercy Parson!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE,

The Provok'd Wife.

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SCENE, *Spring-Garden.*

*Constant and Heartfree cross the Stage. As they go off,
Enter Lady Fanciful and Madamoiselle mask'd, and
dogging 'em.*

Const. So : I think we are about the time appointed ;
Let us walk up this way. *[Exeunt.]*

La. F. Good : Thus far I have dogg'd 'em without be-
ing discover'd. 'Tis infallibly some Intrigue that brings
them to *Spring-Garden*. How my poor Heart is torn
and wrackt with Fear and Jealousy ! Yet let it be any
thing but that Flirt *Belinda*, and I'll try to bear it. But
if it prove her, all that's Woman in me shall be employ'd
to destroy her.

[Exeunt after Constant and Heartfree.]

*Re-enter Constant and Heartfree. Lady Fanciful
and Madamoiselle still following at a distance.*

Const. I see no Females yet, that have any thing to say
to us. I'm afraid we are banter'd.

Heartf. I wish we were ; for I'm in no Humour to
make either them or my self merry.

Const. Nay I'm sure you'll make them merry enough,
if I tell 'em why you are dull. But prithee, why so hea-
vy and sad, before you begin to be ill us'd ?

Heartf. For the same Reason, perhaps, that you are
so brisk and well pleas'd ; because both Pains and Plea-
sures are generally more considerable in Prospect, than
when they come to pass.

*Enter Lady Brute and Belinda, mask'd, and poorly
dress'd.*

Const. How now, who are these ? Not our Game, I
hope.

Heartf. If they are, we are e'en well enough serv'd,
to come a hunting here, when we had so much better
Game in Chase elsewhere.

La. F. to Madamoiselle.] So, those are their Ladies
without doubt. But I'm afraid that *Doily Stuff* is not

worn for want of better Clothes. They are the very Shape and Size of *Belinda* and her Aunt.

Madam. So day be inteed, Matam.

La. F. We'll slip into this close Arbor, where we may hear all they say.

[*Exeunt Lady Fancyful and Madamoiselle.*]

La. B. What are you afraid of us, Gentlemen?

Heartf. Why truly, I think we may, if Appearance don't lye.

Bel. Do you always find Women what they appear to be, Sir?

Heartf. No, forsooth; but I seldom find 'em better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the Outside's best; you think?

Heartf. 'Tis the honestest.

Const. Have a care, *Heartfree*; you are relapsing again.

La. B. Why, does the Gentleman use to rail at Women?

Const. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good Cause for't. They did not use you so well, as you thought you deserv'd, Sir.

La. B. They made themselves merry at your Expence, Sir.

Bel. Laugh'd when you sigh'd.

La. B. Slept while you were waking.

Bel. Had your Porter beat.

La. B. And threw your Billet-doux in the Fire.

Heartf. Hey day, I shall do more than rail presently.

Bel. Why, you won't beat us, will you?

Heartf. I don't know but I may.

Const. What the Devil's coming here? Sir *John* in a Gown?—

And drunk I'faith.

Enter Sir John.

Sir J. What a Pox—— here's *Constant*; *Heartfree*—— and two Whores I gad—— O your covetous

The Provok'd Wife.

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ious Rogues! what, have you never a spare Punk for your Friend — But I'll share with you.

[He seizes both the Women.

Heartf. Why, what the Plague have you been doing; Knight?

Sir J. Why, I have been beating the Watch, and scandalizing the Clergy.

Heartf. A very good Account, truly.

Sir J. And what do you think I'll do next?

Const. Nay, that no Man can guess.

Sir J. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat Both your Strumpets.

La. B'. aside.] O Lord, we are undone!

Heartf. No, we can't sup together, because we have some Affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two Ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our Right in 'em.

Bel. aside.] Lord, what shall we do?

Sir J. Let me see, their Clothes are such damn'd Clothes, they won't pawn for the Reckoning.

Heartf. *Sir John*, your Servant. Rapture attend you.

Const. Adieu Ladies, make much of the Gentleman:

La. B. Why sure you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken Fellow to abuse us.

Sir J. Who do you call a drunken Fellow, you Slut you? I'm a Man of Quality; the King has made me a Knight.

[*Heartf. runs off.*

Heartf. Ay, ay, you are in good hands; Adieu, Adieu.

La. B. The Devil's hands: Let me go, or I'll —
For Heaven's sake protect us.

[*She breaks from him, runs to Constant, twitching off her Mask, and clapping it on again.*

Sir J. I'll Devil you, you Jade you: I'll demolish your ugly Face.

Const. Hold a little, Knight, she swoons.

Sir J. I'll swoon her.

Const. Hey; *Heartfree.*

Re

Re-enter Heartfree. Belinda runs to him, and shews her Face.

Heartf. O Heavens! My dear Creature, stand there a little.

Const. Pull him off, *Jack.*

Heartf. Hold, mighty Man; look you, Sir, we did but jest with you. These are Ladies of our Acquaintance, that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir J. Oons, I won't leave you, not I.

Heartf. Nay, but you must tho; and therefore make no words on't.

Sir J. Then you are a couple of damn'd uncivil Fellows. And I hope your Punks will give you sauce to your Mutton. *[Exit Sir John.]*

La. B. Oh, I shall never come to my self again, I'm so frightned.

Const. 'Twas a narrow 'scape indeed.

Bel. Women must needs have Frolicks, you see, whatever they cost 'em.

Heartf. This might have prov'd a dear one tho.

La. B. You are the more oblig'd to us, for the Risque we run upon your accounts.

Const. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our Knight-Errantry, Ladies. This is a second time we have deliver'd you.

La. B. 'Tis true; and since we see Fate has design'd you for our Guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust our selves in your hands. But you must not have the worse Opinion of us for our innocent Frolick.

Heartf. Ladies, you may command our Opinions in every thing that is to your advantage.

Bel. Then, Sir, I command you to be of Opinion, That Women are sometimes better than they appear to be. *[Lady Brute and Constant talk apart.]*

Heartf. Madam, you have made a Convert of me in every thing. I'm grown a Fool: I cou'd be fond of a Woman.

Bel. I thank you, Sir, in the Name of the whole Sex.

Heartf.

The Provok'd Wife.

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Heartf. Which Sex nothing but your self cou'd ever have aton'd for.

Bel. Now has my Vanity a devilish Itch, to know in what my Merit consists.

Heartf. In your Humility, Madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

Bel. One other Compliment, with that serious Face, and I hate you for ever after.

Heartf. Some Women love to be abus'd : Is that it you wou'd be at ?

Bel. No, not that neither : but I'd have Men talk plainly what's fit for Women to hear ; without putting 'em either to a real, or an affected Blush.

Heartf. Why then, in as plain Terms as I can find to express my self, I cou'd love you even to——— Matrimony it self a-most, I-gad.

Bel. Just as Sir John did her Ladyship there.

What think you ? Don't you believe one Month's time might bring you down to the same Indifference, only clad in a little better Manners, perhaps ? Well, you Men are unaccountable things, mad till you have your Mistresses, and then stark mad till you are rid of 'em again. Tell me, honestly, is not your Patience put to a much severer Trial after Possession, than before ?

Heartf. With a great many, I must confess, it is, to our eternal Scandal ; but I——— dear Creature, do but try me.

Bel. That's the surest way indeed, to know, but not the safest.

To Lady B.] Madam, are not you for taking a turn in the Great Walk ? It's almost dark, no body will know us.

La. B. Really I find my self something idle, *Belinda* ; besides, I dote upon this little odd private Corner. But don't let my lazy Fancy confine you.

Const. aside.] So, she wou'd be left alone with me, that's well.

Bel. Well, we'll take one turn, and come to you again.

To

To Heartf.] Come, Sir, shall we go pry into the Secrets of the Garden? Who knows what Discoveries we may make?

Heartf. Madam, I'm at your Service.

Const. to Heartf. aside.] Don't make too much haste back; for d'ye hear—I may be busy.

Heartf. Enough. *[Exit Belinda and Heartfree.]*

La. B. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr. *Constant.* I'm afraid I shall lose your good Opinion of me.

Const. My good Opinion, Madam, is like your Cruelty, never to be remov'd.

La. B. But if I should remove my Cruelty, then there's an end of your good Opinion.

Const. There is not so strict an Alliance between 'em neither. 'Tis certain I shou'd love you then better (if that be possible) than I do now; and where I love, I always esteem.

La. B. Indeed, I doubt you much: Why, suppose you had a Wife, and she should entertain a Gallant.

Const. If I gave her just Cause, how cou'd I justly condemn her?

La. B. Ah; but you'd differ widely about just Causes.

Const. But Blows can bear no dispute.

La. B. Nor Ill-Manners much, truly.

Const. Then no Woman upon Earth has so just a Cause as you have.

La. B. O, but a faithful Wife, is a beautiful Character.

Const. To a deserving Husband, I confess it is.

La. B. But can his Faults release my Duty?

Const. In Equity without doubt. And where Laws dispense with Equity, Equity should dispense with Laws.

La. B. Pray let's leave this Dispute; for you Men have as much Witchcraft in your Arguments, as Women have in their Eyes.

Const. But whilst you attack me with your Charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

La.

La. B. The Case is not the same. What Mischief we do, we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Const. Beauty soon obtains Pardon, for the Pain that it gives, when it applies the Balm of Compassion to the Wound: But a fine Face, and a hard Heart, is almost as bad as an ugly Face and a soft one; both very troublesome to many a poor Gentleman.

La. B. Yes, and to many a poor Gentlewoman too, I can assure you. But pray, which of 'em is it, that most afflicts you?

Const. Your Glass and Conscience will inform you Madam. But for Heaven's sake (for now I must be serious) if Pity or if Gratitude can move you:

[*Taking her Hand.*
If Constancy and Truth have Power to tempt you: If Love, if Adoration can affect you, give me at least some Hopes, that Time may do, what you perhaps mean never to perform; 'twill ease my Sufferings, tho not quench my Flame.

La. B. Your Sufferings eas'd, your Flame wou'd soon abate: And that I wou'd preserve, not quench it, Sir.

Const. Wou'd you preserve it, nourish it with Favours; for that's the Food, it naturally requires.

La. B. Yet on that natural Food, 'twou'd surfeit soon, shou'd I resolve to grant all you wou'd ask.

Const. And in refusing all, you starve it. Forgive me therefore, if since my Hunger rages, I at last grow wild, and in my Frenzy force at least this from you.

[*Kissing her Hand.*
Or if you'd have my Flame soar higher still, then grant me this, and this, and this, and Thousands more; [*Kissing first her Hand, then her Neck*] *Aside.*] For now's the time, she melts into Compassion.

La. B. Aside.] Poor Coward Virtue, how it shuns the Battel. O Heaven's! let me go.

Const. Ay, go, ay: Where shall we go, my Charming Angel—— into this private Arbour—— Nay, let's lose no time—— Moments are precious.

La. B. And Lovers wild. Pray let us stop here; at least for this time.

Const.

The Provok'd Wife.

Const. 'Tis impossible: He that has Power over you, can have none over himself.

[*As he is forcing her into the Arbour, Lady Fancyful and Madamoiselle bolt out upon them, and run over the Stage.*]

La. B. Ah; I'm lost.

La. F. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe.

Madam. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe.

Const. Death and Furies, who are these?

La. B. O Heavens! I'm out of my Wits: if they knew me, I am ruin'd.

Const. Don't be frightned; Ten thousand to one they are Strangers to you.

La. B. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Const. Whither will you go?

La. B. Home, as if the Devil were in me. Lord, where's this *Belinda* now?

Enter Belinda and Heartfree.

O! it's well you are come: I'm so frightned my Hair stands an end. Let's be gone, for Heaven's sake.

Bel. Lord, what's the matter?

La. B. The Devil's the Matter, we are discover'd. Here's a couple of Women have done the most impertinent thing. Away, away, away, away, away.

[*Exit running.*]

Re-enter Lady Fancyful and Madamoiselle.

La. F. Well *Madamoiselle*, 'tis a prodigious thing, how Women can suffer filthy Fellows to grow so familiar with 'em.

Madam. Ah Matam, il n'y arien defi Naturel.

La. F. Fe, fe, fe. But oh my Heart! O Jealousy! O Torture! I'm upon the rack. What shall I do? My Lover's lost, I ne'er shall see him mine.

[*Pausing*—] But I may be reveng'd; and that's the same thing. Ah sweet Revenge! Thou welcome Thought, thou healing Balsam to my wounded Soul. Be but propitious on this one Occasion, I'll place my Heaven in thee, for all my Life to come.

To

To Woman how indulgent Nature's kind;
No Blast of Fortune long disturbs her Mind:
Compliance to her Fate supports her still;
If Love won't make her happy——Mischief will.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

La. Fan. **W**ELL, *Mademoiselle*; did you dog
the filthy Things?

Madam. O que ouy, Matam.

La. F. And where are they?

Madam. Au Logis.

La. F. What, Men and all?

Madam. Tous ensemble.

La. F. O Confidence! What, carry their Fellows to
their own House?

Madam. C'est que le Mar n'y est pas.

La. F. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there,
and quickly too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a
prodigious thing, to see when Men and Women get to-
gether, how they fortify one another in their Impudence.
But if that drunken Fool, her Husband, be to be found
in e'er a Tavern in Town, I'll send him amongst 'em:
I'll spoil their Sport.

Madam. En verite, Matam, ce seroit damage.

La. F. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, *Mademoiselle*; there-
fore never go about it. For I am the steddifest Creature
in the World——when I have determin'd to do Mis-
chief. So, Come along.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Sir John Brute's House.*

Enter Constant, Heartfree, Lady Brute, Belinda, and Lovewell.

La. B. But are you sure you don't mistake, *Lovewell*?

Lov. Madam, I saw 'em all go into the Tavern together, and my Master was so drunk he cou'd scarce stand.

La. B. Then, Gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay, and play at Cards with us, an hour or two: for they'll scarce part till Morning.

Bel. I think 'tis a pity they shou'd ever part.

Const. The Company that's here, Madam.

La. B. Then, Sir, the Company that's here, must remember to part it self, in time.

Const. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future Favours, by indiscreet Usage of this. The moment you give us the Signal, we shan't fail to make our Retreat.

La. B. Upon those Conditions then, let us sit down to Cards.

Enter Lovewell.

O Lord, Madam, here's my Master just staggering in upon you; he has been quarrellsom yonder, and they have kick'd him out of the Company.

La. B. Into the Closet, Gentlemen, for Heaven's sake; I'll wheedle him to Bed, if possible.

[Const. and Heartf. run into the Closet.]

Enter Sir John, all dirt and bloody.

La. B. Ah ——— ah ——— he's all over Blood.

Sir J. What the Plague does the Woman ——— squall for? Did you never see a Man in Pickle before?

La. B. Lord, where have you been?

Sir J. I have been at ——— Cuffs.

La. B. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded.

Sir J. Sound as a Roach, Wife.

La.

The Provok'd Wife.

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La. B. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir J. You know—— I think you lye.

La. B. You do me wrong to think so. For Heaven's my Witness, I had rather see my own Blood trickle down, than yours.

Sir J. Then will I be crucify'd.

La. B. 'Tis a hard Fate, I shou'd not be believ'd.

Sir J. 'Tis a damn'd Atheistical Age, Wife.

La. B. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender Proofs, how great my Care is of you.

But, spite of all your cruel Thoughts, I'll still persist, and at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down, and sleep a little.

Sir J. Why—— do you think I am drunk—— you Slut, you?

La. B. Heaven forbid I shou'd : But I'm afraid you are feverish. Pray let me feel your Pulse.

Sir J. Stand off, and be damn'd.

La. B. Why, I see your Distemper in your very Eyes. You are all on fire. Pray go to Bed ; let me intreat you.

Sir J. —— Come kiss me, then.

Lady B. kissing him.] There : Now go. [*Aside.*] He stinks like Poison.

Sir J. I see it goes damnably against your Stomach——

And therefore—— Kiss me again.

La. B. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir J. Do't, I say.

La. B. *aside.*] Ah Lord have Mercy upon me.

Well ; there : now will you go?

Sir J. Now, Wife, you shall see my Gratitude. You give me two Kisses—— I'll give you—— two Hundred.

[*Kisses and tumbles her.*]

La. B. O Lord : Pray Sir John, be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in?

Bel. Aside.] If I were in her Pickle, I'd call my Gallant out of the Closet, and he shou'd cudgel him soundly.

The Provok'd Wife.

Sir J. So, now you being as dirty and as nasty as my self, we may go pig together. But first I must have a Cup of your Cold-Tea, Wife.

[*Going to the Closet.*]

La. B. O, I'm ruin'd !
There's none there, my Dear.

Sir J. I'll warrant you, I'll find some, my Dear.

La. B. You can't open the Door, the Lock's spoil'd ; I have been turning and turning the Key this half hour to no purpose. I'll send for the Smith to-morrow.

Sir J. There's ne'er a Smith in *Europe* can open a Door with more Expedition than I can do.—— As for Example.

——Pou. [He bursts open the Door with his Foot.
——How now ?

What the Devil have we got here ? ——

Constant—— Heartfree—— And two Whores again, I gad—— This is the worst Cold-Tea—— that ever I met with in my Life.——

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

La. B. *Aside.*] O Lord what will become of us ?

Sir J. Gentlemen—— I am your very humble Servant—— I give you many Thanks.—— I see you take care of my Family—— I shall do all I can to return the Obligation.

Const. Sir, how oddly soever this Business may appear to you, you wou'd have no cause to be uneasy, if you knew the Truth of all things ; your Lady is the most virtuous Woman in the World, and nothing has past, but an innocent Frolick.

Heartf. Nothing else, upon my Honour, Sir.

Sir J. You are both very Civil Gentlemen—— And my Wife, there, is a very Civil Gentlewoman ; therefore I don't doubt but many Civil things have past between you. Your very humble Servant.

La. B. [*Aside to Const.*] Pray be gone ; He's so drunk he can't hurt us to-night, and to morrow Morning you shall hear from us.

Const. I'll obey you, Madam.

Sir, when you are cool, you'll understand Reason better. So then I shall take the pains to inform you. If not—— I wear a Sword, Sir, and so good by to you.

Come along, *Heartfree*.

Sir J. Wear a Sword,—— And what of all that, Sir?——

He comes to my House; Eats my Meat; Lies with my Wife; Dishonours my Family; Gets a Bastard to inherit my Estate—— And when I ask a civil Account of all this—— Sir, says he, I wear a Sword—— Wear a Sword, Sir? Yes Sir, says he, I wear a Sword—— It may be a good Answer at Cross-purposes; but 'tis a damn'd one to a Man in my whimsical Circumstance—— Sir, says he, I wear a Sword!

To Lady B.] And what do you wear now? ha! tell me. *[Sitting down in a great Chair.*

What? you are modest, and can't——

Why then I'll tell you, you Slut you.

You wear—— an impudent lewd Face——

A damn'd designing Heart—— And a Tail—— and a Tail full of—— *[He falls fast asleep snoring.*

La. B. So; Thanks to kind Heaven, he's fast for some Hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our Story handsomely; for we must lye like the Devil, to bring our selves off.

La. B. What shall we say, *Belinda*?

Bel. *Musing.*]—— I'll tell you: It must all light upon *Heartfree* and I. We'll say he has courted me some time, but for Reasons unknown to us, has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from Sir *John*. That therefore hearing him upon the Stairs, he run into the Closet, tho against our Will, and Constant with him, to prevent Jealousy. And to give this a good impudent Face of Truth, (that I may deliver you from the Trouble you are in) I'll e'en (if he pleases) marry him.

La. B. I'm beholden to you, Cousin; but that wou'd be carrying the Jest a little too far for your own sake: You know he's a younger Brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true : But I like him, and have Fortune enough to keep above Extremity. I can't say, I wou'd live with him in a Cell, upon Love and Bread and Butter : But I had rather have the Man I love, and a middle State of Life, than that Gentleman in the Chair, there, and twice your Ladyship's Splendour.

La. B. In truth, Niece, you are in the right on't : for I am very uneasy with my Ambition. But perhaps, had I married as you'll do, I might have been as ill us'd.

Bel. Some Risque, I do confess, there always is : But if a Man has the least Spark, either of Honour or Good-Nature, he can never use a Woman ill, that loves him, and makes his Fortune both. Yet I must own to you, some little Struggling I still have, with this teasing Ambition of ours. For Pride, you know, is as natural to a Woman, as 'tis to a Saint. I can't help being fond of this Rogue ; and yet it goes to my Heart to think I must never whisk to *Hide-Park*, with above a Pair of Horses ; have no Coronet upon my Coach, nor a Page to carry up my Train. But above all—— that Business of Place—— Well ; taking Place is a Noble Prerogative.

La. B. Especially after a Quarrel.

Bel. Or of a Rival. But pray say no more on't, for fear I change my Mind.

For o' my Conscience, were't not for your Affair in the ballance, I shou'd go near to pick up some odious Man of Quality yet, and only take poor *Heartfree* for a Gallant.

La. B. Then him you must have, however things go ?

Bel. Yes.

La. B. Why we may pretend what we will ; but 'tis a hard matter to live without the Man we love.

Bel. Especially when we are married to the Man we hate.

Pray tell me : Do the Men of the Town ever believe us virtuous, when they see us do so ?

La. B. O, no : Nor indeed hardly, let us do what we will.

They

The Provok'd Wife.

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They most of 'em think, there is no such thing as Virtue, consider'd in the strictest Notions of it: And therefore when you hear 'em say, Such a one is a Woman of Reputation, they only mean she's a Woman of Discretion. For they consider, we have no more Religion than they have, nor so much Morality: and between you and I, *Belinda*, I'm afraid the want of Inclination seldom protects any of us.

Bel. But what think you of the fear of being found out?

La. B. I think that never kept any Woman virtuous long. We are not such Cowards neither. No: Let us once pass Fifteen, and we have too good an Opinion of our own Cunning, to believe the World can penetrate into what we wou'd keep a Secret. And so, in short, we cannot reasonably blame the Men for judging of us by themselves.

Bel. But sure we are not so wicked as they are after all?

La. B. We are as wicked, Child, but our Vice lies another way: Men have more Courage than we, so they commit more bold impudent Sins. They quarrel, fight, swear, drink, blaspheme, and the like: Whereas we, being Cowards, only backbite, tell lyes, cheat at Cards, and so forth. But 'tis late: Let's end our Discourse for to-night, and out of an excess of Charity, take a small care of that nasty Drunken Thing there——Do but look at him, *Belinda*.

Bel. Ah——'tis a savoury Dish.

La. B. As savoury as 'tis, I'm cloy'd with't. Pristhee call the Butler to take it away.

Bel. Call the Butler?——Call the Scavenger.

To a Servant within.] Who's there? Call *Rasor*! Let him take away his Master, scour him clean with a little Soap and Sand, and so put him to Bed.

La. B. Come *Belinda*, I'll e'en lie with you to-night; and in the Morning we'll send for our Gentlemen to set this Matter even.

Bel. With all my heart.

La. B. Good Night, my Dear, [*Making a low Curtsy.*

Both.

Borb. Ha, ha, ha.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Rasor.

My Lady there's a Wag—— My Master there's a Cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing—— Women have deprav'd Appetites—— My Lady's a Wag ; I have heard all ; I have seen all ; I understand all ; and I'll tell all ; for my little *Frenchwoman* loves News dearly. This Story'll gain her Heart, or nothing will.

[*To his Master.*] Come, Sir, your Head's too full of Fumes at present, to make room for your Jealousy ; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you, when your Pate's empty. Come to your Kennel, you Cuckoldly drunken Sot you.

[*Carries him out upon his Back.*

SCENE, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

La. F. But, why did not you tell me before, *Mademoiselle*, that *Rasor* and you were fond ?

Madam. De Modesty hinder me, *Matam.*

La. F. Why truly Modesty does often hinder us from doing things we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet, to do any thing you bid him ? Do you think, to oblige you, he wou'd speak Scandal ?

Madam. *Matam*, to oblige your Ladyship, he shall speak Blasphemy.

La. F. Why then, *Mademoiselle*, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his Master, all that pass at *Spring-Garden* : I have a mind he shou'd know what a Wife and a Niece he has got.

Madam. Il le fera, *Matam.*

Enter a Footman, who speaks to Mademoiselle apart.

Foot. *Mademoiselle*, yonder's Mr. *Rasor* desires to speak with you.

Madam. Tell him, I come presently.

[*Exit Footman.*

Rasor be dare, *Matam.*

La.

The Provok'd Wife.

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La. F. That's fortunate : Well, I'll leave you together. And if you find him stubborn, *Madamoiselle*—— hark you—— don't refuse him a few little reasonable Liberties, to put him into humour.

Madam. *Laissez moy faire.* [Exit Lady Fancyful.
[*Rasor* peeps in ; and seeing Lady Fancyful gone, runs to *Madamoiselle*, takes her about the Neck, and kisses her.]

Madam. How now, Confidence !

Rasor. How now, Modesty !

Madam. Who make you so familiar, Sirrah ?

Rasor. My Impudence, Hussy.

Madam. Stand off, Rogue-face.

Rasor. Ah—— *Madamoiselle*—— great News at our House.

Madam. Why what be de matter ?

Rasor. The Matter !—— why, Uptails all the matter.

Madam. Tu te mocque de moy.

Rasor. Now do you long to know the Particulars : The Time when : The Place where : The Manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Madam. Nay, den dou kill me, *Rasor.*

Rasor. Come, kiss me, then.

[Clapping his hands behind him.

Madam. Nay, pridee tell me.

Rasor. Good by to ye.

[Going.

Madam. Hold, hold : I will kiss dee.

[Kissing him.

Rasor. So, that's civil : Why now, my pretty Pall ; my Goldfinch ; my little Waterwagtail—— you must know that—— Come, kiss me again.

Madam. I won't kiss dee no more.

Rasor. Good b'wy to ye.

Madam. Doucement ; Dare : es tu content ?

[Kissing him.

Rasor. So : Now I'll tell thee all.

Why the News is, That Cuckoldom in Folio, is newly printed ; and Matrimony in Quarto, is just going into the Press. Will you buy any Books, *Madamoiselle* ?

Madam. Tu parle comme un Librair, de Devil no understand dee.

Rasor.

Rasor. Why then, that I may make my self intelligible to a Waiting-Woman, I'll speak like a Valet de Chambre. My Lady has cuckolded my Master.

Madam. Bon.

Rasor. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that.

We can't yet prove Matter of Fact upon her.

Madam. N'importe.

Rasor. But we can prove, that Matter of Fact had like to have been upon her.

Madam. Ouy da.

Rasor. For we have such bloody Circumstances.

Madam. Sans doute.

Rasor. That any Man of Parts may draw tickling Conclusions from 'em.

Madam. Fort bien.

Rasor. We have found a couple of tight well-built Gentlemen, stuf into her Ladyship's Closet.

Madam. Le Diable.

Rasor. And I, in my particular Person, have discover'd a most damnable Plot, how to persuade my poor Master, that all this Hide and Seek, this *Will-in-the-Whisp*, has no other meaning than a Christian Marriage for sweet *Mrs. Belinda*.

Madam. Une Marriage ? ——— Ah les Drolefs.

Rasor. Don't you interrupt me, Huffy ; 'tis agreed, I say. And my innocent Lady, to riggle her self out at the Back-door of the Business, turns Marriage-Bawd to her Niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair Body, to be tumbled and mumbled, by that young liquorish Whipster, *Heartfree*. Now are you satisfy'd ?

Madam. No.

Rasor. Right Woman ; always gaping for more.

Madam. Dis be all den, dat dou know ?

Rasor. All ; Ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Madam. Dou be fool, dou know noting.

Ecoute mon pauvre Rasor.

Dou sees des two Eyes ? ——— Des two Eyes have see de Devil.

Rasor. The Woman's mad.

Madam.

Madam. In Spring-Garden, dat Rogue Constant meet dy Lady.

Rasor. Bon.

Madam.— I'll tell de no more.

Rasor. Nay, prithee, my Swan.

Madam. Come, kifs me den.

[Clapping her hands behind her as he had done before.]

Rasor. I won't kifs you, not I.

Madam. Adieu.

Rasor. Hold— Now proceed.

[Gives her a hearty Kifs.

Madam. A ca—— I hide my self in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First dy drunken Master come mal a propos ; but de Sot no know his own dear Wife, so he leave her to her Sport——

Den de game begin.

De Lover say soft ting,

De Lady look upon de Ground.

He take her by de Hand :

She turn her Head on oder way.

Den he squeeze very hard :

Den she pull—— very softly.

Den he take her in his Arm :

Den she give him leetel pat.

Den he kifs her Tettons :

Den she say—— Pish, nay see.

Den he tremble :

Den she—— sigh.

Den he pull her into de Arbour :

Den she pinch him.

Rasor. Ay, but not so hard, you Baggage you.

Madam. Den he grow bold :

She grow weak.

He trow her down,

Il tombe dessu,

Le Diable assist,

Il emport tout :

Stand off, Sirrah.

{ Rasor struggles with her as if he wou'd throw her down.

Rasor. You have set me afire, you Jade you.

Madam. Den go to de River and quenach dy self.

Rasor.

Rasor. What an unnatural Harlot 'tis !

Madam. Rasor. [Looking languishing on him.]

Rasor. Mademoiselle.

Madam. Dou no love me ?

Rasor. Not love thee! — More than a *Frenchman* does Soup.

Madam. Den dou will refuse noting dat I bid dee ?

Rasor. Don't bid me be damn'd then.

Madam. No, only tell dy Master, all I have tell dee of dy Laty.

Rasor. Why, you little malicious Strumpet, you ; shou'd you like to be serv'd so ?

Madam. Dou dispute den ; — Adieu.

Rasor. Hold — But why wilt thou make me be such a Rogue, my Dear ?

Madam. Voila un vrai Anglois ! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Vat en au Diable.

Rasor. Hold once more : In hopes thou'lt give me up thy Body, I resign thee up my Soul.

Madam. Bon : ecoute donc : — if dou fail me — I never see dee more — if thou obey me —

She takes him about the Neck, and gives him a smacking kiss.

Je m'abandonne a toy.

[Exit Mademoiselle.]

Rasor. licking his Lips.]

Not be a Rogue ? — *Amor vincit Omnia.* [Exit Rasor.]

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

La. F. Marry, say ye ? Will the two Things marry ?

Madam. On le va faire, Matam.

La. F. Look you *Mademoiselle*, in short, I can't bear it — No ; I find I can't — If once I see 'em a-bed-together, I shall have ten thousand Thoughts in my Head will make me run distracted. Therefore run and call *Rasor* back immediately, for something must be done to stop this impertinent Wedding. If I can defer it but four and twenty Hours, I'll make such work about Town, with that little pert Slut's Reputation, he shall as soon marry a Witch.

Madam. [Aside.] La voilà bien intentionee.

[Exeunt.]

S C E N E,

SCENE, Constant's Lodgings.

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

Const. But what dost thou think will come of this Business?

Heartf. 'Tis easier to think what will not come on't.

Const. What's that?

Heartf. A Challenge. I know the Knight too well for that: His dear Body will always prevail upon his noble Soul to be quiet.

Const. But tho he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his Wife.

Heartf. Not if you whisper him in the Ear, you won't have him do't, and there's no other way left that I see. For as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we shou'd not be; and I don't think him quite Blockhead enough yet, to be persuaded we were got into his Wife's Closet only to peep in her Prayer-book.

Enter Servant with a Letter.

Serv. Sir, Here's a Letter, a Porter brought it.

Const. O ho, here's Instructions for us.

Reads.]

The Accident that has happen'd has touch'd our Invention to the quick. We wou'd fain come off, without your help; but find that's impossible. In a word, the whole Business must be thrown upon a Matrimonial Intrigue, between your Friend and mine. But if the Parties are not fond enough, to go quite through with the matter; 'tis sufficient for our turn, they own the Design. We'll find Pretences enough, to break the Match. Adieu.

— Well, Woman for Invention! How long wou'd my Blockhead have been a producing this.

— Hey, *Heartfree*: what musing, Man? Prithee be chearful. What say'st thou, Friend, to this Matrimonial Remedy?

H

Heartf.

Heartf. Why I say, it's worse than the Disease.

Const. Here's a Fellow for you: There's Beauty and Money on her Side, and Love up to the Ears on his; and yet ———

Heartf. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allow'd to boggle at marrying the Niece, in the very Moment that you are debauching the Aunt.

Const. Why truly, there may be something in that. But have not you a good Opinion enough of your own Parts, to believe you cou'd keep a Wife to your self?

Heartf. I shou'd have, if I had a good Opinion enough of hers, to believe she cou'd do as much by me. For to do 'em right, after all, the Wife seldom rambles, till the Husband shews her the way.

Const. 'Tis true; a Man of real Worth, scarce ever is a Cuckold, but by his own Fault. Women are not naturally leud, there must be something to urge 'em to it. They'll cuckold a Churl, out of Revenge; a Fool, because they despise him; a Beast, because they loath him. But when they make bold with a Man they once had a well-grounded Value for, 'tis because they first see themselves neglected by him.

Heartf. Nay, were I well assur'd, that I shou'd never grow Sir *John*, I ne'er shou'd fear *Belinda*'d play my Lady. But our Weakness, thou know'st, my Friend, consists in that very Change, we so impudently throw upon (indeed) a steddier and more generous Sex.

Const. Why Faith we are a little impudent in that matter, that's the truth on't. But this is wonderful, to see you grown so warm an Advocate for those (but t'other day) you took so much pains to abuse.

Heartf. All Revolutions run into Extremes, the Bigot makes the boldest Atheist; and the coyest Saint, the most extravagant Strumpet. But prithee advise me in this Good and Evil, this Life and Death, this Blessing and Cursing, that is set before me. Shall I marry ——— or die a Maid?

Const. Why Faith, *Heartfree*, Matrimony is like an Army going to engage. Love's the forlorn Hope, which is soon cut off; the Marriage-Knot is the main Body, which

which may stand buff a long long time; and Repentance is the Rear-Guard, which rarely gives ground, as long as the main Battel has a Being.

Heartf. Conclusion then; you advise me to whore on, as you do.

Const. That's not concluded yet. For tho Marriage be a Lottery, in which there are a wondrous many Blanks; yet there is one inestimable Lot, in which the only Heaven on Earth is written. Wou'd your kind Fate but guide your Hand to that, tho' I were wrapt in all that Luxury it self could clothe me with, I still shou'd envy you.

Heartf. And justly too: For to be capable of loving one, doubtless is better than to possess a Thousand. But how far that Capacity's in me, alas, I know not.

Const. But you wou'd know?

Heartf. I wou'd so.

Const. Matrimony will inform you.

Come, one Flight of Resolution carries you to the Land of Experience; where, in a very moderate time, you'll know the Capacity of your Soul and your Body both, or I'm mistaken. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E, *Sir John Brute's House.*

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

Bel. Well, Madam, what Answer have you from 'em?

La. B. That they'll be here this Moment. I fancy 'twill end in a Wedding: I'm sure he's a Fool if it don't. Ten thousand Pound, and such a Lafs as you are, is no contemptible Offer to a younger Brother. But are not you under strange Agitations? Prithee how does your Pulse beat?

Bel. High and low, I have much a-do to be valiant: sure it must feel very strange to go to bed to a Man?

La. B. Um—— it does feel a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

La. B. Good-morrow, Gentlemen: How have you slept after your Adventure?

Heartf. Some careful Thoughts, Ladies, on your accounts, have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful Thoughts on your own, I believe, have hinder'd you from sleeping. Pray how does this Matrimonial Project relish with you?

Heartf. Why Faith e'en as storming Towns does with Soldiers, where the Hopes of delicious Plunder banishes the Fear of being knock'd on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible after all, that you dare think of downright lawful Wedlock?

Heartf. Madam, you have made me so fool-hardy, I dare do any thing.

Bel. Then, Sir, I challenge you; and Matrimony's the Spot where I expect you.

Heartf. 'Tis enough; I'll not fail.

[*Aside.*] So, now I am in for *Hobbes's* Voyage; a great Leap in the Dark.

La. B. Well, Gentlemen, this Matter being concluded then, have you got your Lessons ready? For Sir *John* is grown such an Atheist of late, he'll believe nothing upon easy Terms.

Const. We'll find ways to extend his Faith, Madam. But pray how do you find him this Morning?

La. B. Most lamentably morose, chewing the Cud after last Night's Discovery; of which however he had but a confus'd Notion e'en now. But I'm afraid the Valet de Chambre has told him all, for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of *Belinda's* Marriage, I had no other Answer but a Grunt: From which, you may draw what Conclusions you think fit.

But to your Notes, Gentlemen, he's here.

Enter Sir John and Rastor.

Const. Good-morrow, Sir.

Heartf. Good-morrow, Sir *John*. I'm very sorry my Indiscretion shou'd cause so much Disorder in your Family.

Const.

Const. Disorders generally come from Indiscretions, Sir; 'tis no strange thing at all.

La. B. I hope, my Dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir J. None, my Dove,

Bel. If not, I hope my Consent to marry Mr. *Heart-free* will convince you. For as little as I know of Amours, Sir, I can assure you, one Intrigue is enough to bring four People together, without further mischief.

Sir J. And I know too, that Intrigues tend to Procreation of more kinds than one. One Intrigue will beget another as soon as beget a Son or a Daughter.

Const. I am very sorry, Sir, to see you still seem unsatisfy'd with a Lady, whose more than common Virtue, I am sure, were she my Wife, shou'd meet a better Usage.

Sir J. Sir, if her Conduct has put a trick upon her Virtue, her Virtue's the Bubble, but her Husband's the Loser.

Const. Sir, You have receiv'd a sufficient Answer already, to justify both her Conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your Family-Affairs; but I perceive I am the Man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir J. Wou'd it did not concern me, and then I shou'd not care who it concern'd.

Const. Well, Sir, if Truth and Reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir J. Lord, Sir, you are very hasty: If I had been found at Prayers in your Wife's Closet, I shou'd have allow'd you twice as much time to come to your self in.

Const. Nay, Sir, if Time be all you want, we have no Quarrel.

Heartf. I told you how the Sword wou'd work upon him.

[*Sir John muses.*

Const. Let him muse; however, I'll lay fifty Pound our Foreman brings us in, Not Guilty.

Sir J. Aside.] 'Tis well——'tis very well—— In spite of that young Jade's Matrimonial Intrigue, I am

a downright stinking Cuckold——Here they are——
Boo——

[*Putting his Hand to his Forehead.*]

Methinks I could butt with a Bull.

What the Plague did I marry her for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she wou'd have lain with me; for I wou'd have done so, because I lik'd her: But that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her?—— If I put my Horns into my Pocket, she'll grow insolent—— If I don't, that Goat there, that Stallion, is ready to whip me thro' the Guts—— The Debate then is reduc'd to this; Shall I die a Hero? or live a Rascal?—— Why wiser Men than I have long since concluded, that a living Dog is better than a dead Lion.——

[*To Const. and Heartf.*] Gentlemen, now my Wine and my Passion are governable, I must own, I have never observ'd any thing in my Wife's Course of Life, to back me in my Jealousy of her: but Jealousy's a mark of Love; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

Lady Fancyful enters disguis'd, and addresses to Belinda apart.

Constant. I'm glad to see your Reason rule at last. Give me your Hand: I hope you'll look upon me as you are wont.

Sir F. Your humble Servant. [*Aside.*] A wheedling Son of a Whore.

Heartf. And that I may be sure you are Friends with me too, pray give me your Consent to wed your Niece.

Sir F. Sir, you have it with all my heart: Damn me if you han't. [*Aside.*] 'Tis time to get rid of her: A young pert Pimp; she'll make an incomparable Bawd in a little time.

Enter a Servant, who gives Heartfree a Letter.

Bel. Heartfree your Husband, say you? 'tis impossible.

La. F. Wou'd to kind Heaven it were: but 'tis too true; and in the World there lives not such a Wretch. I'm young; and either I have been flatter'd by my Friends, as well as Glass, or Nature has been kind

kind and generous to me. I had a Fortune too was greater far than he could ever hope for ; but with my Heart I am robb'd of all the rest. I'm slighted and I'm beggar'd both at once ; I have scarce a bare Subsistence from the Villain, yet dare complain to none ; for he has sworn, if e'er 'tis known I am his Wife, he'll murder me.

[Weeping.]

Bel. The Traitor !

La. F. I accidentally was told he courted you ; Charity soon prevail'd upon me to prevent your Misery : And as you see, I'm still so generous even to him, as not to suffer he should do a thing, for which the Law might take away his Life.

[Weeping.]

Bel. Poor Creature ! how I pity her !

(*They continue talking aside.*)

Heartf. (aside.) Death and Damnation !—— Let me read it again. (*Reads.*) *Tho I have a particular Reason not to let you know who I am till I see you ; yet you'll easily believe 'tis a faithful Friend that gives you this Advice—— I have lain with Belinda (Good !)—— I have a Child by her (Better and Better !) which is now at Nurse ; (Heaven be prais'd !) and I think the Foundation laid for another : (Ha !—— Old Truepenny !)—— No Rack could have tortur'd this Story from me ; but Friendship has done it. I heard of your Design to marry her, and cou'd not see you abus'd. Make use of my Advice, but keep my Secret till I ask you for't again. Adieu.*

[*Exit Lady Fancyful.*]

Const. to B.] Come, Madam, shall we send for the Parson ? I doubt here's no Business for the Lawyer : Younger Brothers have nothing to settle but their Hearts, and that I believe my Friend here has already done very faithfully.

Bel. [scornfully.] Are you sure, Sir, there are no old Mortgages upon it ?

Heartf. [coldly.] If you think there are, Madam, it mayn't be amiss to defer the Marriage till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. aside.] How the gall'd Horse kicks !

[*To Heartf.*] We'll defer it as long as you please, Sir.

Heartf.

Heartf. The more time we take to consider on't, Madam, the less apt we shall be to commit Oversight; therefore, if you please, we'll put it off for just nine Months.

Bel. Guilty Consciences make Men Cowards; I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heartf. And they make Women desperate; I don't wonder you were so quickly determin'd.

Bel. What does the Fellow mean?

Heartf. What does the Lady mean?

Sir J. Zoons, what do you both mean?

[*Heart. and Bel. walk chafing about.*
Raf. aside.] Here is so much Sport going to be spoil'd, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impertinent Lady *Fancyful*, and her Plots, and her *French-woman* too; she's a whimsical, ill-natur'd Bitch, and when I have got my Bones broke in her Service, 'tis ten to one but my Recompence is a Clap; I hear them tittering without still. I cod, I'll e'en go lug them both in by the Ears, and discover the Plot, to secure my Pardon.

[*Exit Raf.*

Const. Prithce explain, *Heartfree*.

Heartf. A fair Deliverance; thank my Stars and my Friend.

Bel. 'Tis well it went no farther; a base Fellow!

La. B. What can be the Meaning of all this?

Bel. What's his Meaning, I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married him — I had had no Husband.

Heartf. And what's her Meaning, I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married her — I had had Wife enough.

Sir J. Your People of Wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both, will you speak that you may be understood?

Enter Rasor in Sackcloth, pulling in Lady Fancyful and Madamoiselle.

Raf. If they won't, here comes an Interpreter.

La. B. Heaven's! what have we here?

Raf.

The Provok'd Wife.

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Raf. A Villain—— but a repenting Villain : Stuff which Saints in all Ages have been made of.

All. Rafor !

La. B. What means this sudden Metamorphose ?

Raf. Nothing ; without my Pardon.

La. B. What Pardon do you want ?

Raf. Imprimis, Your Ladyship's ; for a damnable Lye made upon your spotless Virtue, and set to the Tune of *Spring-Garden*.

To Sir J.] Next, at my generous Master's Feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble Thoughts with Phantoms of disgraceful Cuckoldom.

To Const.] Thirdly, I to this Gentleman apply, for making him the Hero of my Romance.

To Heartf.] Fourthly, your Pardon, noble Sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of Banns, Bishop's Licence, Friends Consent—— or your own Knowledge.

To Bel. And, lastly, to my good young Lady's Clemency I come, for pretending the Corn was sow'd in the Ground, before ever the Plow had been in the Field.

Sir J. (aside.) So that after all, 'tis a moot Point, whether I am a Cuckold or not.

Bel. Well, Sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you my self, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the Company. But I must know then who 'tis has put you upon all this Mischief ?

Raf. Sathan, and his Equipage ; Woman tempted me, Lust weaken'd me—— and so the Devil overcame me ; as fell *Adam*, so fell I.

Bel. Then pray, *Mr. Adam*, will you make us acquainted with your *Eve* ?

Raf. To Madam.] Unmask, for the honour of *France*.

All. Madamoiselle !

Madamois. Me ask ten thousand Pardon of all de good Company.

Sir J. Why this Mystery thickens instead of clearing up.

To Raf.] You Son of a Whore you, put us out of our pain.

Raf.

Raf. One moment brings Sunshine.

Shewing Madam.] 'Tis true, this is the Woman that tempted me, but this is the Serpent that tempted the Woman; and if my Prayers might be heard, her Punishment for so doing should be like the Serpent's of old.

Pulls off Lady F's Mask.] She should lie upon her Face all the days of her Life.

All. Lady Fancyful!

Bel. Impertinent!

La. B. Ridiculous!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. I hope your Ladyship will give me leave to wish you Joy, since you have own'd your Marriage your self.

To Heartf.] I vow 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another Wife, when you had one already so charming as her Ladyship.

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

La. Fan. aside.] Confusion seize 'em, as it seizes me!

Madamoisf. Que le Diable e toute ce Maraut de Rasor.

Bel. Your Ladyship seems disorder'd: A breeding Qualm, perhaps, Mr. *Heartfrees*: your Bottle of Hungarian Water to your Lady. Why, Madam, he stands as unconcern'd, as if he were your Husband in earnest.

La. Fan. Your Mirth's as nauseous as your self, *Belinda*; you think you triumph over a Rival now: He-las! ma pauvre fille. Where'er I'm Rival, there's no Cause for Mirth. No, my poor Wretch, 'tis from another Principle I have acted. I knew that thing there wou'd make so perverse a Husband, and you so impertinent a Wife, that lest your mutual Plagues shou'd make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the Match. He! he! he! he! he!

[Exit laughing affectedly, Madamoisf. following her.]

Madamoisf. He! he! he! he! he!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir J. aside.] Why now this Woman will be married to somebody too.

Bel. Poor Creature! what a Passion she's in; but I forgive her.

Heartf. Since you have so much Goodness for her, I hope you'll pardon my Offence too, Madam. *Bel.*

The Provok'd Wife.

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Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal Fault.

Heartf. Then Pardons being past on all sides, pray let's to Church to conclude the Day's Work.

Const. But before you go, let me treat you pray with a Song, a new-married Lady made within this Week; it may be of use to you both.

S O N G.

I.

WHEN yielding first to Damon's Flame,

I sunk into his Arms;
He swore he'd ever be the same,

Then rifled all my Charms.

But fond of what h'ad long desir'd,

Too greedy of his Prey,

My Shepherd's Flame, alas! expir'd

Before the Verge of Day.

II.

My Innocence in Lovers Wars,

Reproach'd his quick Defeat;

Confus'd, asham'd, and bath'd in Tears,

I mourn'd his cold Retreat.

At length, Ah Shepherdess! cry'd he,

Wou'd you my Fire renew,

Alas, you must retreat like me,

I'm lost if you pursue.

Heartf. So, Madam; now had the Parson but done his Business——

Bel. You'd be half weary of your Bargain.

Heartf. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's Lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, Sir.

Heartf. Then let's to Church:

And if it be our Chance to disagree——

Bel. Take heed—— the surly Husband's Fate you see,

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